# Adverse Effects of Tobacco Consumption on Health

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## Tobacco Use and Its General Threat to Human Health

Tobacco comes from the tobacco plant. There are around 65 known species of the tobacco plant and among these Nicotiana Tobacco is the most widely used. It is the one legally consumed product that can negatively affect everyone exposed to it. It is commonly used all over the world; 2005 research showed that around 20% of people in the world smoke tobacco. It is one of the preventable causes of death. Every year, tobacco kills almost five million people, a higher figure compared to AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined. It is estimated that in the coming years, the number of deaths will increase to more than eight million.

A lot of people smoke tobacco such as cigarettes, but there are also reports that a larger group of people use smokeless tobacco. Smokeless tobacco mainly comes in two kinds: snuff (finely cut tobacco leaves that might be moist or dry) and chewing tobacco (loose leaves in twist or plug form). This paper studies the health risks involved in smoking and consuming smokeless tobacco. The primary focus is on the adverse effects tobacco has on health and the type of diseases that a tobacco consumer might be prone to.

Some diseases are connected with the use of tobacco; one such condition is Oral Cancer. Among the areas that are most at risk from smoking tobacco is the lungs. After lung cancer, the second most at-risk are the larynx and the oral cavity(Warnakulasuriya et al., 2010). It has been found in various research that smokers are the most prone to oral cancer risk. A recent study included 12 studies conducted in Italy, the USA, Sweden, Uruguay, Korea, Taiwan, China, and India. The study found that smokers were 3.43 times more at risk of contracting cancer compared to non-smokers. It is quite clear that oral cancer risk is connected to both, the duration and intensity of smoking tobacco. The risk among heavy smokers and non-smokers provides proof that tobacco is the major contributor to oral cancer.

## Oral and Throat Cancers Associated with Tobacco Consumption

*Oropharyngeal cancers and Laryngeal cancers are other diseases found in tobacco users*(Gupta & Ray, 2003)*. People affected by these two tumors witness* cancer cells forming in the tissues of the

oropharynx. *These diseases are most prevalent in India. They are found mostly among people who chew tobacco with betel quid. Some people eat tobacco and bête quid as well as smoke tobacco, which increases their chances of acquiring cancerous cells.*

*Oesophageal cancer is another form of cancer that affects tobacco consumers. It starts in the food pipe; or esophagus, this tube carries food to our stomach. Patients usually have difficulty swallowing food and might notice food sticks in the throat. Heartburn is also a symptom. Patients generally witness acids from the stomach go back up. Causes of Oesophageal Cancer are smoking or tobacco, chewing betel, and using snuff.*

*Cigarette smoking has also been associated with tooth loss in studies conducted. It has been known that smokers usually lose teeth over a period. A survey conducted on 789 men over a period of 35 years deduced that the rate of tooth loss among smokers was approximately twice that of those who had never smoked. Another study was conducted on 248 females in Boston*("Women & Tobacco," n.d.)*. The results showed the risk of tooth loss in regular smokers compared to women who had never smoked was 3.4 times higher. Apparently, tooth loss is not just connected to smoking cigarettes; it can affect cigar and pipe smokers as well* (Baker et al., 2000)*. A study conducted on 705 respondents, in Baltimore, reported that there were more missing teeth among those who smoked pipes and cigars comparatively.*

# Smoking, Dental Disease, and the Deterioration of Oral Health

*Additionally, smokers also have problems related to dental caries. Cross-sectional studies have shown that smokers had a considerably higher amount of decayed teeth, total DFMS, and missing surfaces compared to non-smokers. It was found that smoking cigarettes impairs salivary function; which protects against dental caries.*

*Smoking also affects both the long-term as well as short-term results of implant therapy. Studies conducted by researchers analyzed that implants among smokers had higher risks of being lost. The study showed that smokers had a lower implant survival rate compared to non-smokers.*

*Smoking also causes the teeth to turn black, a slight discoloration of the tongue, and a change in the smoker's breath. Smokers are known to have an aetiological factor: smoker's breath. Smoking also causes the smoker's body to delay healing wounds. A smoker's palate is noticed in heavy pipe smokers and cigar smokers. The smoker's palate forms with its unique features. A white plaque-like change on the* palatal mucosa; because of the hyperkeratosis, several red dots in small elevated nodules represent the dilated and inflamed duct openings of minor salivary glands in this region. Though a smoker's palate is not a dangerous thing, it can be cured(Organization, 2008).

# Cardiovascular Damage and the Systemic Effects of Smoking

Smoking has an impact on the heart. It increases the risk of contracting cardiovascular diseases, which include coronary heart disease as well. Smoking ruins the lining of the arteries, which results in atheroma building up and narrowing the arteries; causing a heart attack. Cigarettes contain toxic substances like carbon monoxide, which reduce the amount of oxygen in the bloodstream and force the heart to pump harder for oxygen. The second substance cigarettes has nicotine, which urges the body to produce more adrenaline and, hence, beat faster, raising the blood pressure. This causes the heart to tire quickly. Cigarettes also force the blood to clot and block the arteries, causing a heart attack.

Tobacco not only affects smokers and smokeless tobacco users, but it also affects non-smokers. When people smoke cigarettes or any other product of tobacco, they put themselves as well as the people sitting close to them in harm's way. These people might be family members, colleagues, or just people sitting beside us on the bus. Non-smokers may be at risk of attracting the same type of diseases and smokers might be more prone to these threats.

Thus, it can be concluded that there is a direct relationship between smoking and various health issues. And, if tobacco use is not discontinued it might have long-lasting effects with severe consequences.

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