

Fastfacts

Young people, mental health and smoking

No.23 – October 2016

- there are strong links between smoking and mental health issues, especially among adolescents and young adults
 - stopping smoking is associated with improvements in depression, anxiety, stress, and psychological quality of life compared with continuing to smoke
 - what is perceived as stress relief from smoking is usually relief from nicotine withdrawal and sustains the cycle of addiction
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Young adulthood and smoking uptake

- around two thirds (66%) of smokers start smoking regularly before the age of 18
 - 99% of first use is by 26 years of age
 - 57% of Scottish smokers aged between 16-24 want to stop smoking
 - consumption of any tobacco products in adolescence and becoming a heavy smoker then or later share some common risk factors (parental smoking/conduct problems)
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Mental health conditions

- depression does not seem to be a forerunner to heavy cigarette use among teenagers. However, current cigarette use is a powerful determinant of developing high depressive symptoms
 - there is a strong association between heavy smoking and mood disorders such as later major depression, persistent mild depression and bipolar disorders
 - in people with ADHD, bipolar disorder onset in adolescence is a significant risk factor for early smoking initiation.
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Psychosis and schizophrenia

- nicotine dependence and schizophrenia share genetic characteristics
- some research suggests that smoking is an equally strong independent predictor of frequency of psychotic-like experiences as monthly cannabis use, and a younger age of illness onset is associated with having ever smoked
- a study which outlined the average characteristics of smokers with a psychotic disorder noted that participants smoked 30 cigarettes per day, commenced smoking daily at about 18 years of age and this was 5 years before illness onset.