

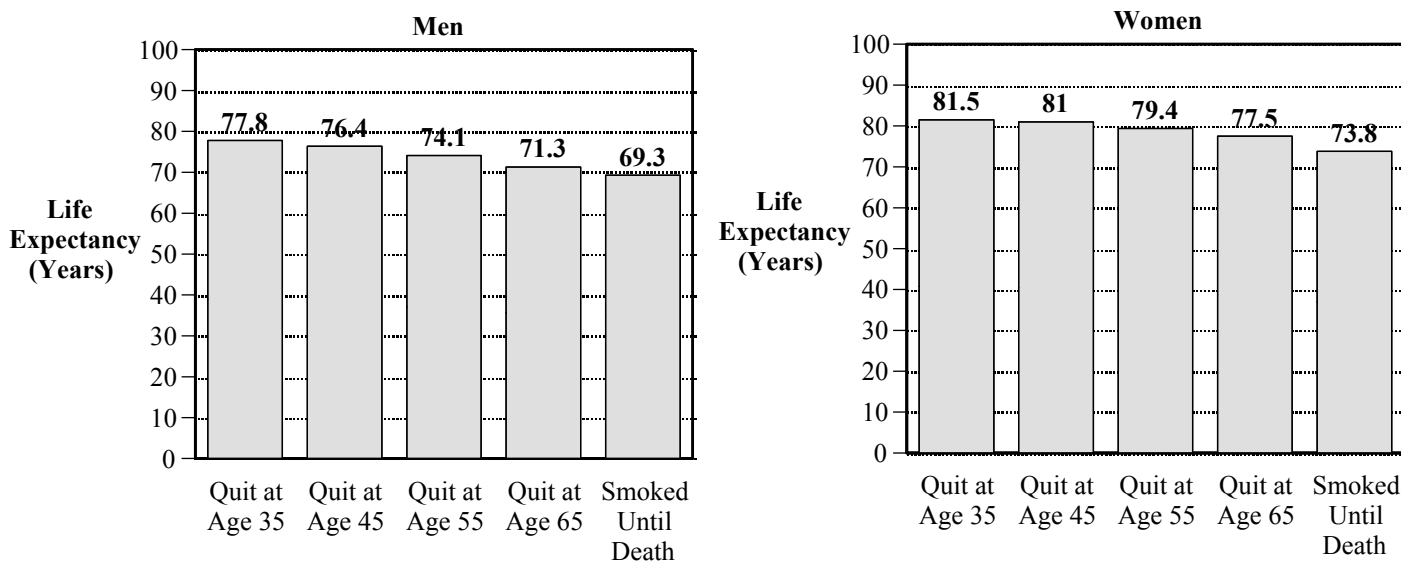
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

People Live Longer When They Stop Smoking, Regardless of the Age at Which They Quit

Stopping smoking at any age increases life expectancies, according to a national cohort study of smoking and mortality rates among U.S. adults. Men who quit smoking at age 35 lived 8.5 years longer than those who never quit smoking (77.8 years vs. 69.3 years), while women who quit at age 35 lived 7.7 years longer (81.5 years vs. 73.8 years) (see figure). Even those who quit smoking at later stages of life gained some benefits. For example, men who quit smoking at age 65 lived an additional 2.0 years, longer than men who never quit while women who quit at age 65 lived 3.7 years longer. According to the authors, “These findings reinforce the urgency of emphasizing smoking cessation to all smokers, irrespective of age, and the importance of never assuming that a smoker is ‘too far gone’” (p. 995).

Life Expectancies for Men and Women Who Were Age 35 in 1990, by Smoking Behavior



NOTES: Life expectancies are adjusted to account for changes in smoking status during the follow-up period (1982-1996) that may have underestimated the benefits of smoking cessation. Total N=877,243 (including nonsmokers).

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Taylor D.H., Hasselblad V., Henley J.S., Thun M.J., Sloan A. “Benefits of Smoking Cessation for Longevity,” *American Journal of Public Health* 92(6):990-996, 2002. For more information contact Dr. Donald Taylor, Jr. at dtaylor@hpolicy.duke.edu.