

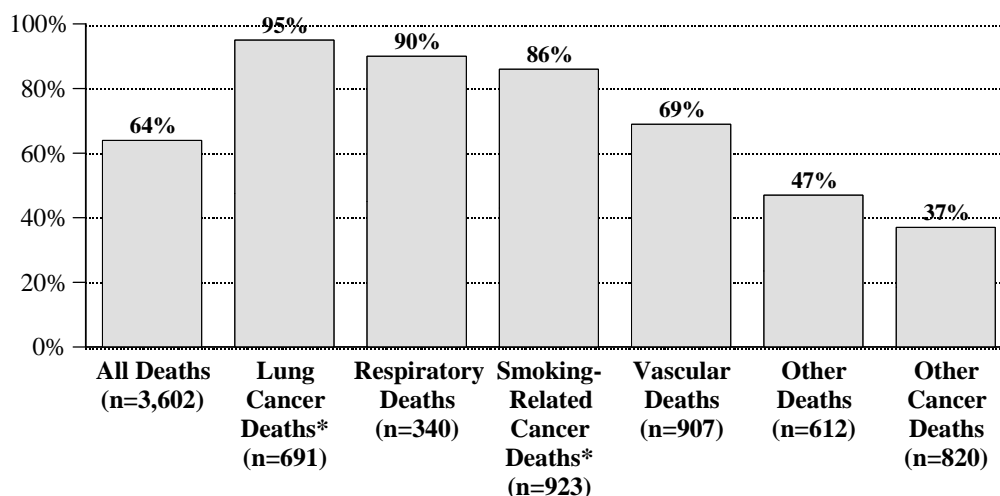
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Nearly Two-Thirds of Deaths Among Women Smokers Attributable to Cigarette Smoking; Risk of Death 20 Years After Quitting Comparable to That of Nonsmoker

Approximately 64% of all deaths among current women smokers are attributable to cigarette smoking, according to a long-term prospective study of the relationship between cigarette smoking, smoking cessation, and mortality in women. The study found that the majority of lung cancer (95%), respiratory (90%), and other smoking-related cancer deaths (86%) were attributable to cigarette smoking (see figure below). In addition, the overall risk of dying among current smokers increased significantly with the number of cigarettes smoked per day and with an early age at initiation. Within the first five years of quitting smoking, however, there was a significant reduction in the risk of death from any cause, and the risk 20 years after quitting decreased to the level of someone who had never smoked. The authors recommend that “effectively communicating risks to smokers and helping them quit successfully should be an integral part of public health programs” (p. 2047).

Percentage of Deaths Attributable to Current Cigarette Smoking, by Cause of Death, 1980 to 2004



NOTE: Data are from the Nurses' Health Study, a prospective observational survey of 104,519 female registered nurses ages 30 to 55 residing in 11 U.S. states. The cohort was established in 1976 and information has been updated and extended on biennial follow-up surveys from 1980 to 2004.

*Lung cancer deaths are also included in smoking-related cancer deaths. Smoking-related cancer deaths are those denoted by the 2004 Surgeon General's report to be caused by smoking, including those of the lung, trachea, lip, mouth, pharynx, esophagus, larynx, pancreas, bladder and kidney, cervix, and stomach.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Kenfield, S.A., Stampfer, M.J., Rosner, B.A., and Colditz, G.A. "Smoking and Smoking Cessation in Relation to Mortality in Women," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 299(17):2037-2047, 2008.

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