

Quitting behaviors and cessation assistance used among smokers with anxiety or depression: Findings among six countries of the EUREST-PLUS ITC Europe Surveys

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Introduction

The current study explores quitting behaviours and use of cessation assistance among adult tobacco users with probable anxiety or depression (PAD) and in six European (EU) Member States (MS).

Methods

The EUREST-PLUS ITC Wave 1 Europe Survey was conducted with a nationally representative cross-sectional sample of 6,011 adult cigarette smokers from six European Union (EU) Member States (MS) [Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Spain] in 2016.

Results

Our study found that one in five smokers sampled from six EU MS had a diagnosis, treatment or positive screen for anxiety or depression, with rates of PAD varying between EU MS. Results of the multivariable logistic regression analysis showed that respondents with PAD were more likely to have made a quit attempt in the last 12 months (AOR 1.75; 95%CI 1.45-2.11), compared to respondents without PAD. Among those respondents with PAD who used support the most frequently reported quit method was prescription-based quit smoking pharmacotherapy (15.4%) followed by e-cigarettes (13.7%) and NRT (11.3%). Person-to-person behavioral support (i.e. local quit services, face-to-face advice from a doctor or other health care professional, telephone or quitline services) was reported significantly more frequently among respondents with PAD compared to those without PAD.

Conclusions

Given both pharmacological and non-pharmacological quit smoking aids have been shown to be safe, acceptable and effective for people with and without mental illness it is important that their use be promoted among smokers with anxiety and depression alongside behavioral counseling. Our findings support the need for interventions targeting health care professionals in providing smoking cessation assistance among this population of smokers.

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