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Smokers at risk from their own 'second-hand' smoke

It is well known that smokers damage their health by directly inhaling cigarette smoke. Now, research published in BioMed Central's open access journal *Environmental Health* has shown that they are at additional risk from breathing environmental tobacco smoke, contrary to the prevailing assumption that such risks would be negligible in comparison to those incurred by actually smoking.

Maria Teresa Piccardo worked with a team of researchers from the National cancer Research Institute, Genoa, Italy, to study the exposure of newsagents in the city to harmful cigarette smoke. She said, "Newsagents were chosen because they work alone in small newsstands, meaning that any tobacco smoke in the air they breathe is strictly correlated to the number of cigarettes smoked by that newsagent. We studied the contribution environmental tobacco smoke made to carcinogen exposure in 15 active smokers."

The researchers found that environmental tobacco smoke may have a significant impact on smokers' health. For someone who smokes 14 cigarettes a day, their own second hand smoke resulted in exposure the equivalent of smoking an extra 2.6 cigarettes. According to Piccardo, "Both active and passive smoking contributions should always be considered in studies about health of active smokers."

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Notes to Editors

1. Is the smokers exposure to environmental tobacco smoke negligible?

Maria Teresa Piccardo, Anna Stella and Federico Valerio

Environmental Health (in press)

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http://www.ehjournal.net/imedia/1150253342270031_article.pdf?random=30671

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