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**Title:** Worrying smoking habits in young Swedish women

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**Body:** Background: Following 10 years of decreased smoking among young people in Sweden, we now have indications of a drastically increased smoking prevalence. The aim was to provide up-to-date information on the prevalence of smoking and smoke-associated respiratory symptoms in young adults in Sweden, with special focus on possible gender differences. Methods: A large-scale, detailed postal questionnaire focusing on asthma and respiratory symptoms, as well as possible risk factors (the West Sweden Asthma Study). The questionnaire was mailed to 30000 randomly selected subjects aged 16-75 years in Gothenburg and the surrounding region in western Sweden, response rate 62%. The analyses are based on responses from 2702 subjects aged 16-25 years (1154 men, 1548 women). Results: Significantly more young women than men were active smokers (23.5% vs 15.9%;  $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, women started smoking earlier and smoked more cigarettes per day. Longstanding cough, sputum production, recurrent wheeze, any wheeze last year, dyspnoea, wheezing with breathlessness or without cold, waking with tight chest, nasal obstruction and rhinorrhea were significantly more common in smokers compared with non-smokers. The smokers to a great extent had smoking parents, while subjects with non-smoking parents in 75% were non-smokers. In the multivariate analysis, smoking increased the risk of symptoms, such as recurrent wheeze, OR 2.0 (95% CI 1.4-3.0) and sputum production, OR 2.4 (1.9-3.1). Conclusion: The fact that smoking today is so common in young women is worrying both in itself and because maternal smoking during pregnancy is a risk factor for wheezing illness in the child. The results call for continuous anti-smoking efforts and not only isolated campaigns.