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Title: Nicotine dependence and changes in smoking status among smokers - report from the obstructive lung disease in Northern Sweden COPD study

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Body: Background: Smoking is strongly related to respiratory health but population based data on nicotine dependence and smoking cessation are scarce. Aim: To evaluate nicotine dependence and motivation to smoking cessation among smokers in relation to changes in smoking habits in a longitudinal population based study. Methods: The OLIN COPD study include 993 subjects with FEV₁/FVC <0.70 (COPD) recruited from population based cohorts and 993 age- and gender matched non-COPD subjects. The study population (n=1986) was since 2005 invited annually to examination with spirometry and structured interview. The Fagerströms test for nicotine dependence (FTND, including heaviness of smoking index, HIS) and a ten-point scale for assessment of motivation to smoking cessation (mtsc) were distributed to current smokers. Data collected during year 2005 and 2008 were used in this study. Results: In 2005 there were 366 smokers; (266 COPD, 100 non-COPD). In the follow-up in 2008, continuous smokers tended to be more common in COPD, 71% (147/208) compared to in non-COPD 60% (47/78). The FTND score 2005 in relation to smoking status in 2008 was 4.06 in continuous smokers, 3.67 in re-starters and 2.85 in ex-smokers (higher score means higher nicotine dependence) while HIS-scores were 2.32, 2.17 and 1.73. The corresponding scores for mtsc were 6.00, 6.43 and 6.62 (higher score means higher motivation). Conclusion: Among continuous smokers higher nicotine dependence as well as lower motivation to smoking cessation has to be addressed in order to promote smoking cessation in the population.