Three year evaluation of a programme by general practitioners to help patients to stop smoking

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Abstract

A controlled study was undertaken to measure the effectiveness of a selected group of general practitioners in helping patients to stop smoking. The programme involved stopping patients at the beginning of a consultation after they had smoked, and the patient was allowed to discuss their reasons for stopping smoking. Three separate groups were compared: group A, patients who attended a general practitioner who was allocated to the intervention group between 1980 and 1982; group B, patients who attended the same general practitioners but not during the periods of allocation; and group C, patients who were not allocated to any of the general practitioners before 1980. Each patient was followed up. There were 38 patients in group A, 106 patients in group B, and 143 patients in group C. Both the intervention and the control groups were followed up for 3 years. The intervention group was significantly more successful in stopping smoking at the end of the study period than the control group (P<0.01).

Introduction

The general practitioner is in a unique position to help patients to stop smoking. It has been shown that 80% of the population begins by the age of 20 years, that approximately 15% of the adult population aged between 25 and 65 are smokers, and of these 60% are married. Furthermore, since studies have shown that 10% of all smokers would like to stop smoking and consider doing so an appropriate thing to do, it is likely that in practice the proportion of smokers who would like to stop smoking is higher. As the general practitioner has the opportunity to stop smoking at the beginning of a consultation, it is important to determine whether the programme is effective in helping patients to stop smoking.

Methods

The study was conducted in a general practice, and all patients were recorded. This was the method of the study. The study population consisted of all adult patients aged 18 years and over who attended the practice for the first time between 1980 and 1982. The patients were followed up for 3 years. The intervention group was significantly more successful in stopping smoking at the end of the study period than the control group (P<0.01).

Results

The study was conducted in a general practice, and all patients were recorded. This was the method of the study. The study population consisted of all adult patients aged 18 years and over who attended the practice for the first time between 1980 and 1982. The patients were followed up for 3 years. The intervention group was significantly more successful in stopping smoking at the end of the study period than the control group (P<0.01).

References


