



HKU study reveals smoking kills half of all elderly smokers: Government should strengthen tobacco control policies

Press Conference
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Speakers

- **Professor Lam Tai-hing**

Sir Robert Kotewall Professor in Public Health

Chair Professor, School of Public Health

Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, HKU

- **Dr Xu Lin**

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Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, HKU

- **Mr Antonio Kwong Cho-shing**

Chairman

Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health (COSH)



Background

World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2008 stated:

Up to $\frac{1}{2}$ of smokers will be killed by smoking:



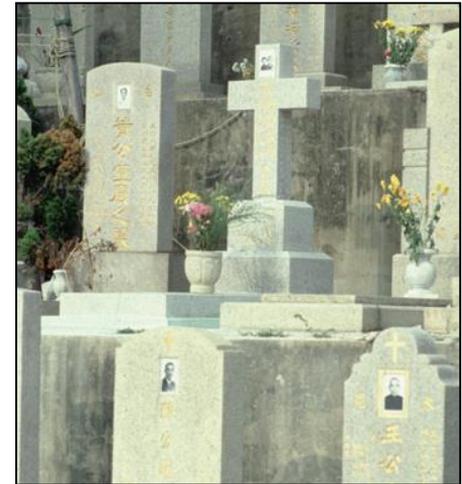
Smokers lose an average of **10 YEARS** in terms of life expectancy



Background

Tobacco Kills around 6 Million Globally in a Year

Cancer	33%
Respiratory diseases	29%
Circulatory diseases	29%
Other diseases	9%

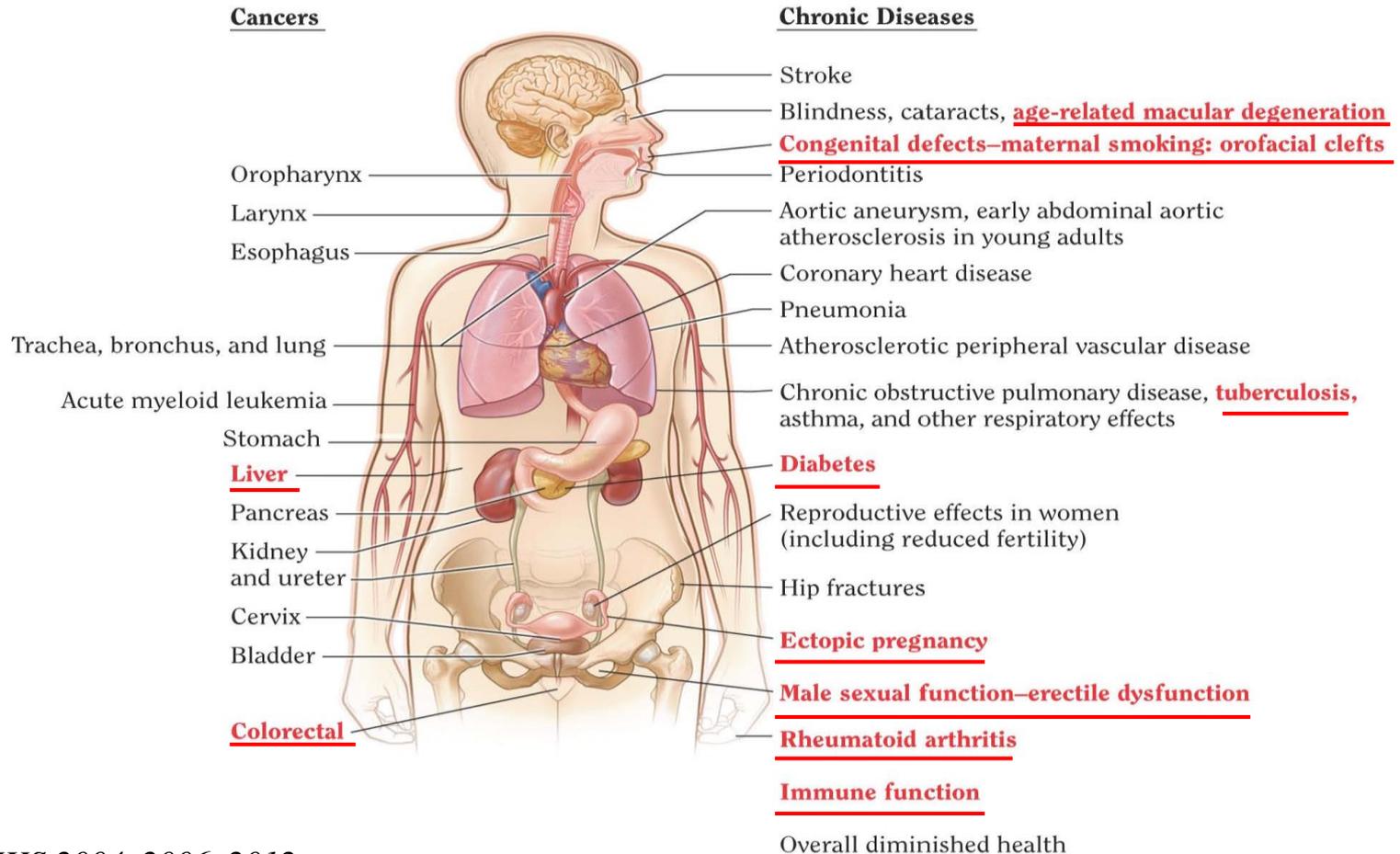


WHO estimates there will be **one billion** deaths attributable to smoking in the 21st century.



Background

The health consequences causally linked to smoking



Source: USDHHS 2004, 2006, 2012.

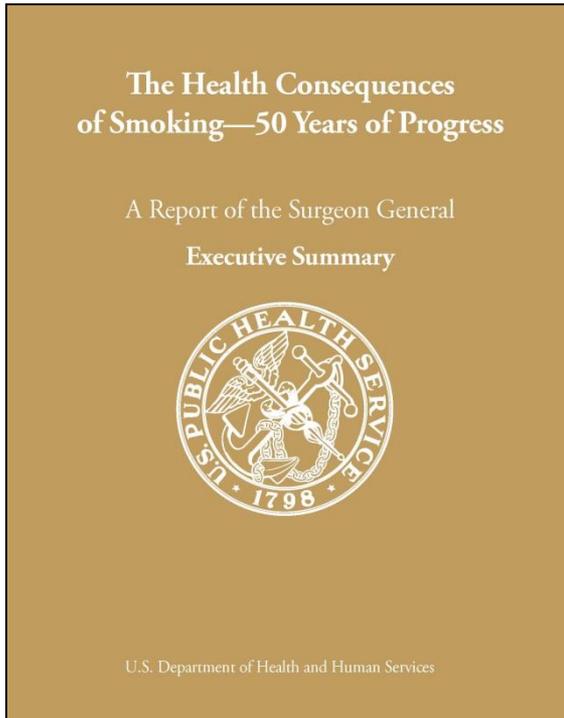
Note: The condition underlined in red is a new disease that has been causally linked to smoking in this report



Background

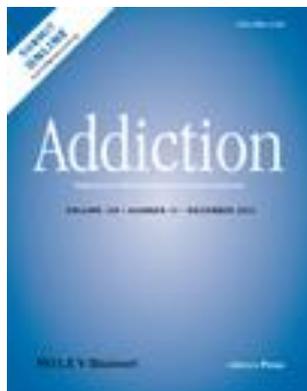
2014

The latest 2014 US Surgeon Report states:



“the relative risk of dying from smoking has increased over the last 50 years”, suggesting the $\frac{1}{2}$ risk could be **underestimated**.

Study has been published in International Journal



Addiction

RESEARCH REPORT

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Smoking and mortality in a prospective cohort study of elderly Chinese in Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT

Background and Aims Large cohort studies on smoking and mortality in elderly people are scarce, and few studies examined smokers aged 85+ years separately. We estimated the risks of all-cause and cause-specific mortality due to smoking in an elderly Chinese cohort in Hong Kong. **Design** A population-based prospective cohort of 65 510 Chinese enrolled from 1998 to 2001 and followed until May 2012. **Setting** All 18 Elderly Health Service centres in Hong Kong, China. **Participants** Elderly people aged 65+ years. **Measurements** Self-reported smoking status was assessed at baseline interview and categorized as never, former and current smokers. **Findings** Compared with never smokers, after adjustment for sex, age, education, social security assistance, housing type, monthly expenditure, alcohol use, depressive symptoms and health status, the hazard ratio (HR) for current smokers was 1.89 [95% confidence interval (CI) = 1.81–1.98] for all participants aged 65+ years at baseline, corresponding to an attributable fraction (AF) of about 50%, which is based on $AF = (HR-1)/HR$. As the effect of smoking varied with age (P for age interaction <0.001), subgroup analysis by age group showed that the adjusted HR for current smokers aged 65–84 years was 1.93 (95% CI = 1.84–2.03), and for 85+ years was 1.29 (95% CI = 1.05–1.58). All the risk estimates did not vary by sex (P for sex interaction ranged 0.74–0.89). **Conclusions** In Hong Kong, the risk of death from smoking appears to be the same for Chinese women as it is for men. Half of all deaths in Chinese smokers aged 65 years and older and a quarter of all deaths in Chinese smokers aged 85 years and older are caused by smoking-attributable diseases.

Keywords All-cause, attributable risk, China, eldest, mortality, smoking.

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About the Research Team

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- Dr Xu Lin
- Dr CM Schooling
- Professor Gabriel M Leung

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- Dr WM Chan
- Dr SY Lee



About the Study

Largest follow-up study in HK jointly conducted by the School of Public Health, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, HKU and Elderly Health Service of Department of Health.

- **Aim:** Examine the association between smoking and mortality in elderly in HK.
- **Study Period:** From 1998-2001 and followed up until May 2012 (about 11 years on average).
- **Methodology:** Data analysis based on data from 18 Elderly Health Centres (EHCs) of Department of Health and the Deaths Registries.



About the Study

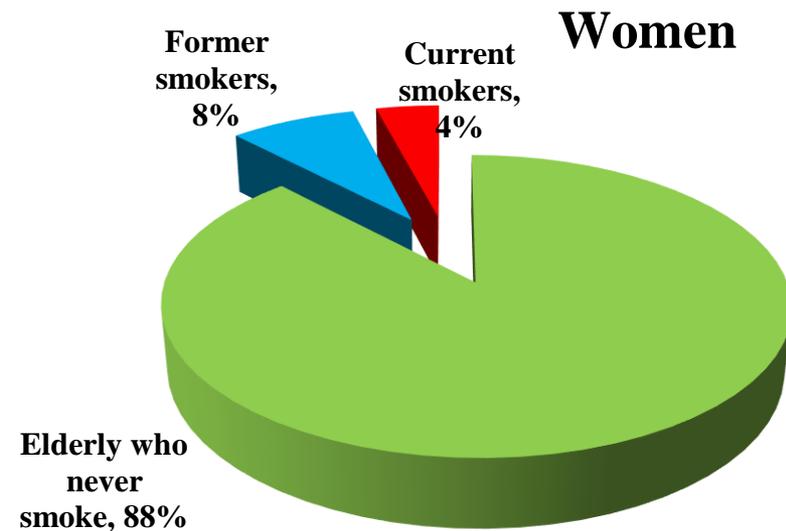
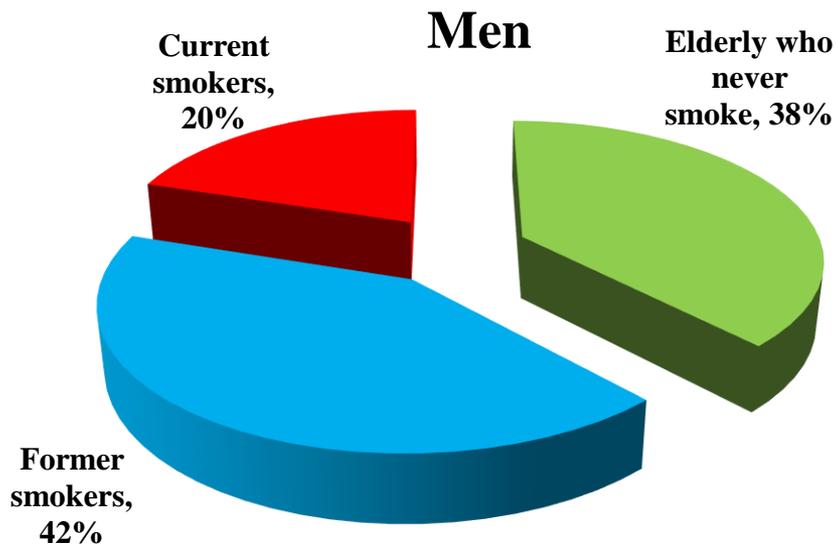
- **Subjects** : 65,510 elderly aged 65 or above, who first enrolled in the EHCs during 1998-2001 (Women 42,917; Men 22,593) were included with long-term follow-up.
- Up to May 31, 2012, the mean follow-up was 11 years, and 19,520 deaths (30%) were observed.



Results

Distribution of subjects of three categories by sex:

- 1) Current smokers;
- 2) Former smokers;
- 3) Non-smokers.



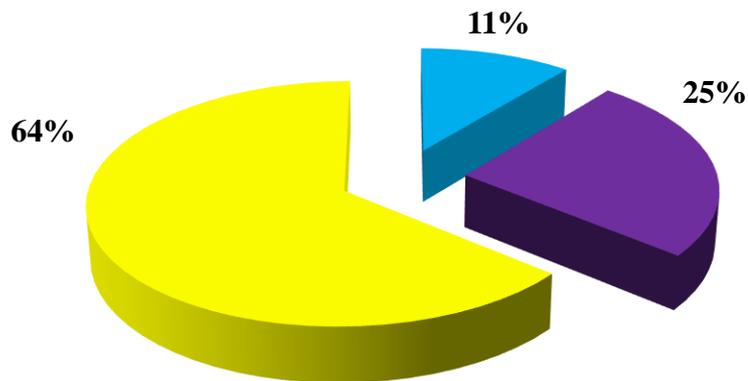


Results

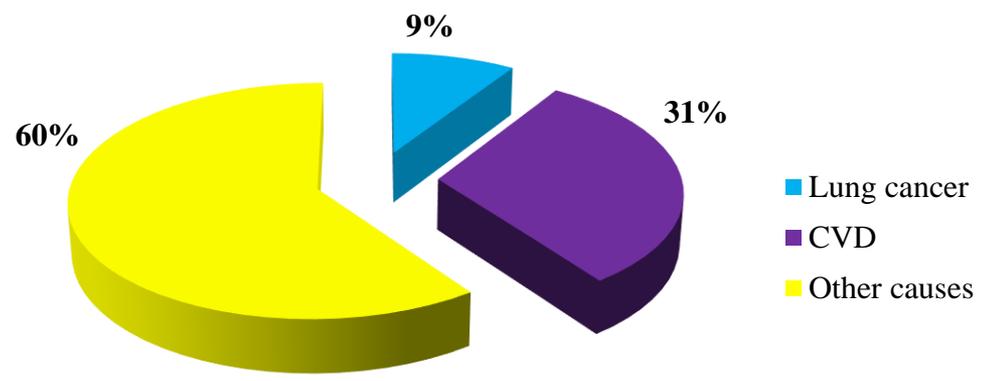
Distribution of the three categories of death causes by sex:

- 1) Lung cancer;
- 2) Cardiovascular disease (CVD);
- 3) Other causes

Men



Women





Results :

Mortality by different smoking status

Age, years	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+	Total (65+)
Non-smokers	11	20	35	59	96	22
Former smokers	21	35	55	83	126	41
Smokers	26	43	66	104	122	44

Unit: Per 1000 persons per year

Among all elderly smokers, there were **44** deaths per year per 1000 persons, 2 times that in non-smokers (**22** deaths per year per 1000 persons).



Results :

Mortality by different smoking status in men

Age, years	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+	Total (65+)
Non-smokers	14	26	46	70	119	27
Former smokers	22	38	59	91	134	42
Smokers	28	48	71	116	138	47

Unit: Per 1000 persons per year

Among elderly male smokers, there were **47** deaths per year per 1000 persons, nearly 2 times that in non-smokers (**27** deaths per year per 1000 persons).



Results :

Mortality by different smoking status in women

Age, years	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+	Total (65+)
Non-smokers	10	18	33	57	93	21
Former Smokers	16	27	47	70	118	38
Smokers	19	29	56	86	105	37

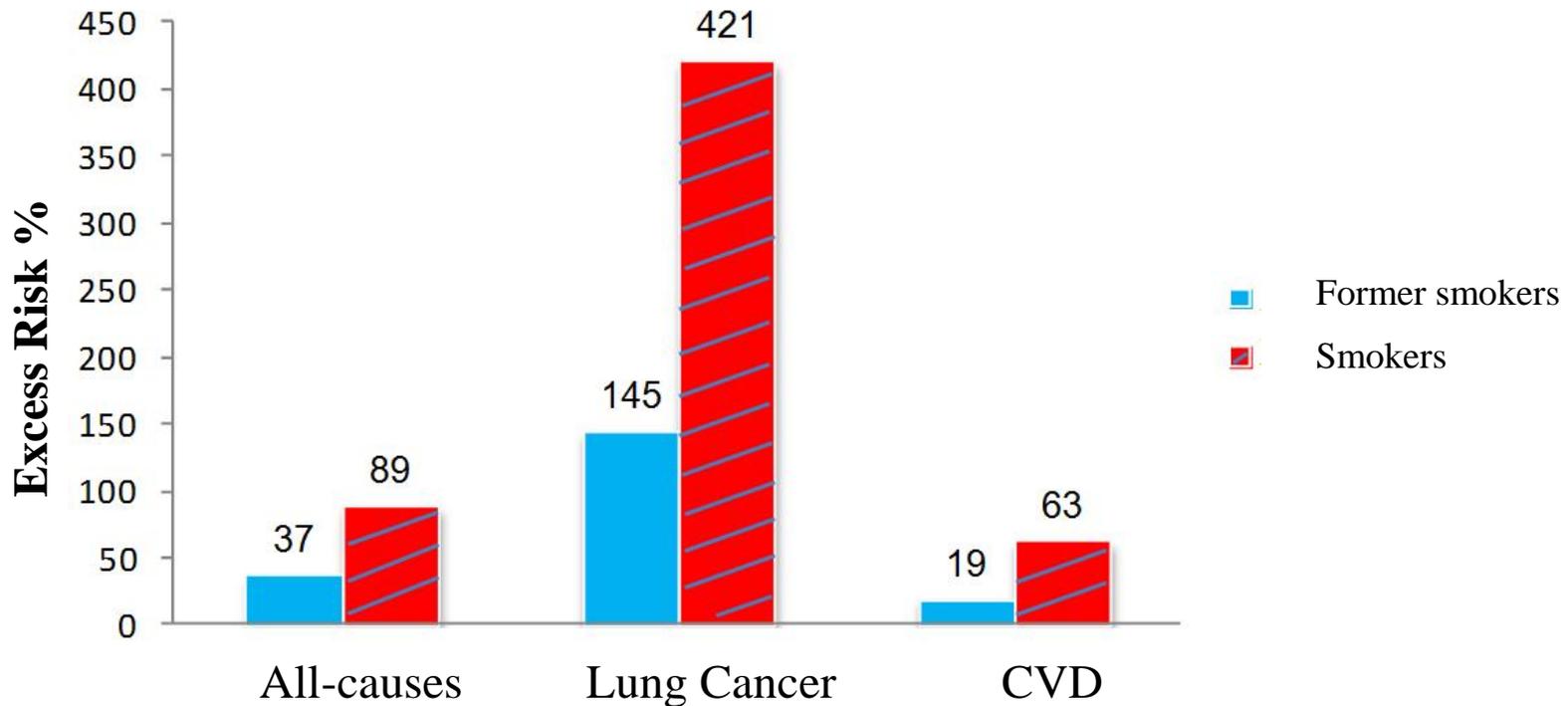
Unit: Per 1000 persons per year

Among elderly female smokers, there were **37** deaths per year per 1000 persons, nearly 2 times that in non-smokers (**21** deaths per year per 1000 persons).



Results :

Smoking increased risk for all-causes, lung cancer & CVD mortality* in people aged 65 or above



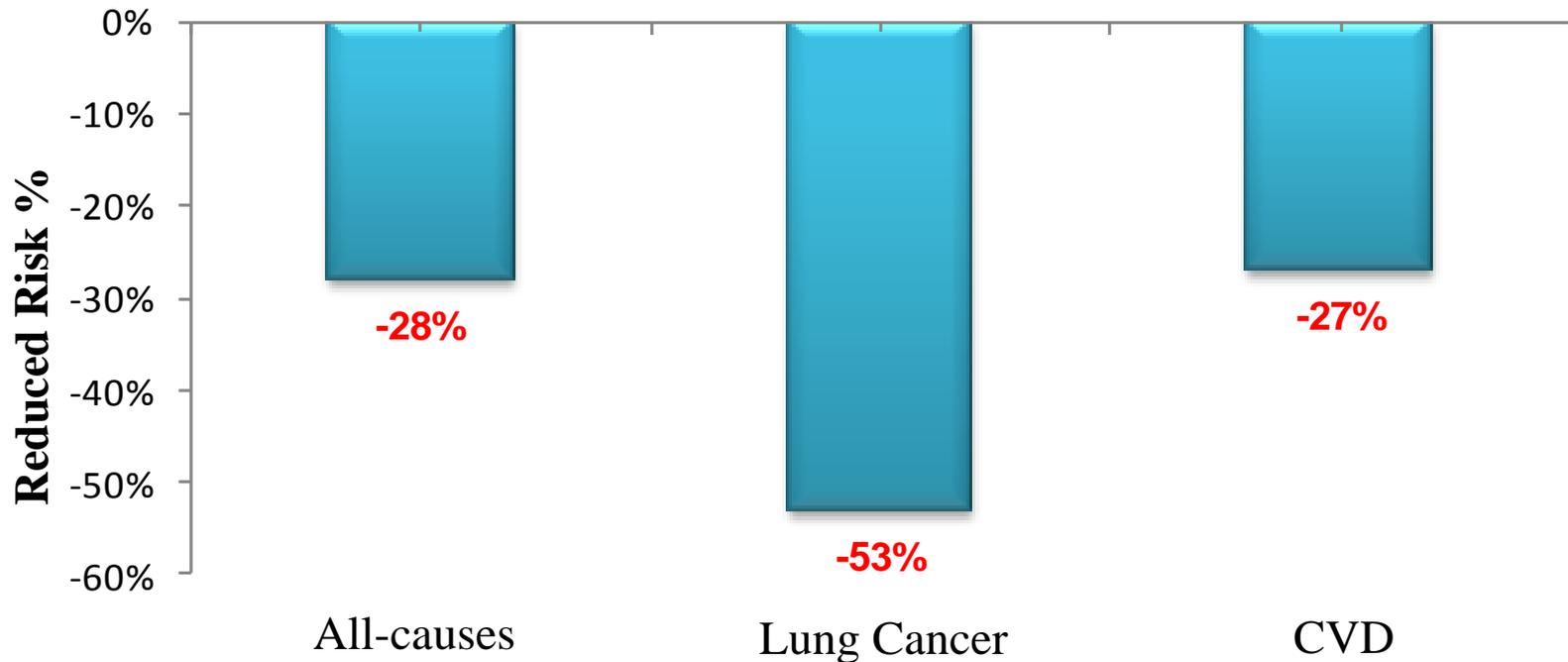
Compared to non-smokers, the risk of all-causes, lung cancer and cardiovascular disease (CVD) mortality increased by 89%, 421% and 63%, respectively.

*all-causes= deaths from any causes



Results :

Smoking cessation reduced risk of all-causes, lung cancer and CVD mortality in people aged 65 or above

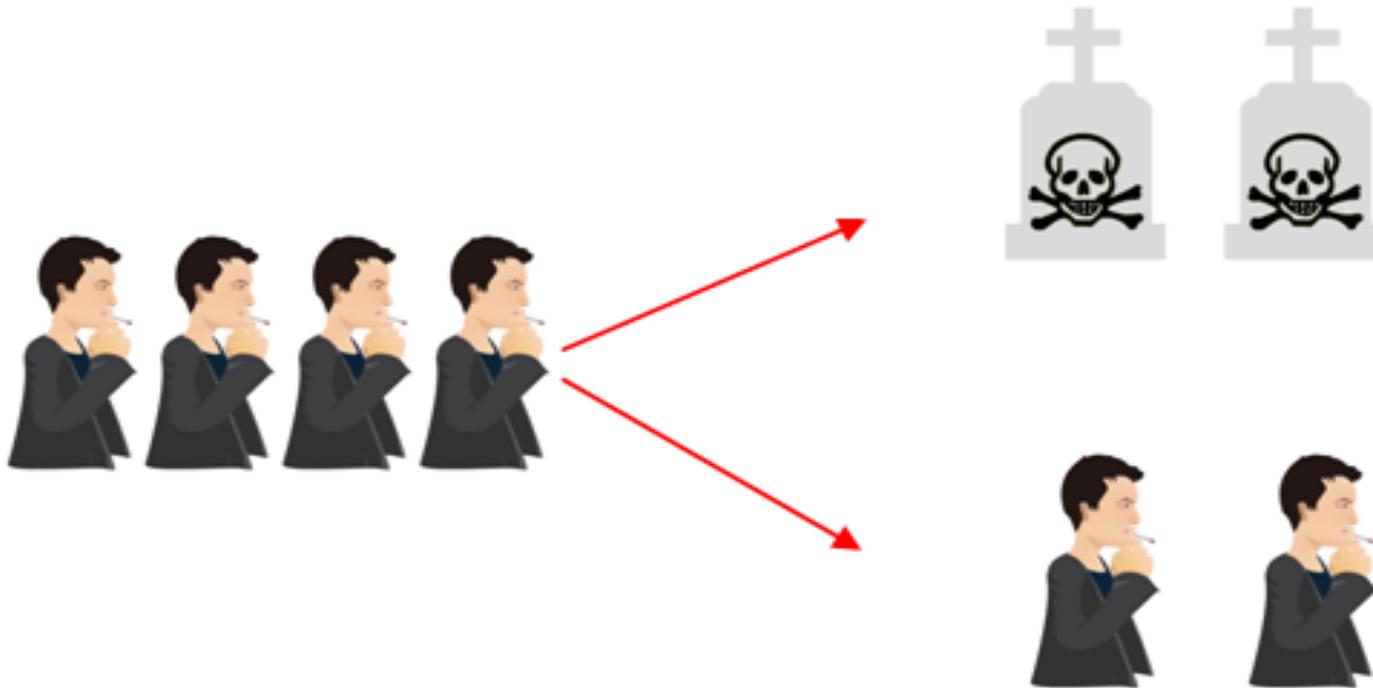


Relative to current smokers, the risk of all-causes, lung cancer and CVD mortality in former smokers reduced by **28%**, **53%** and **27%** respectively.



Results :

Effect of smoking on mortality in elderly men

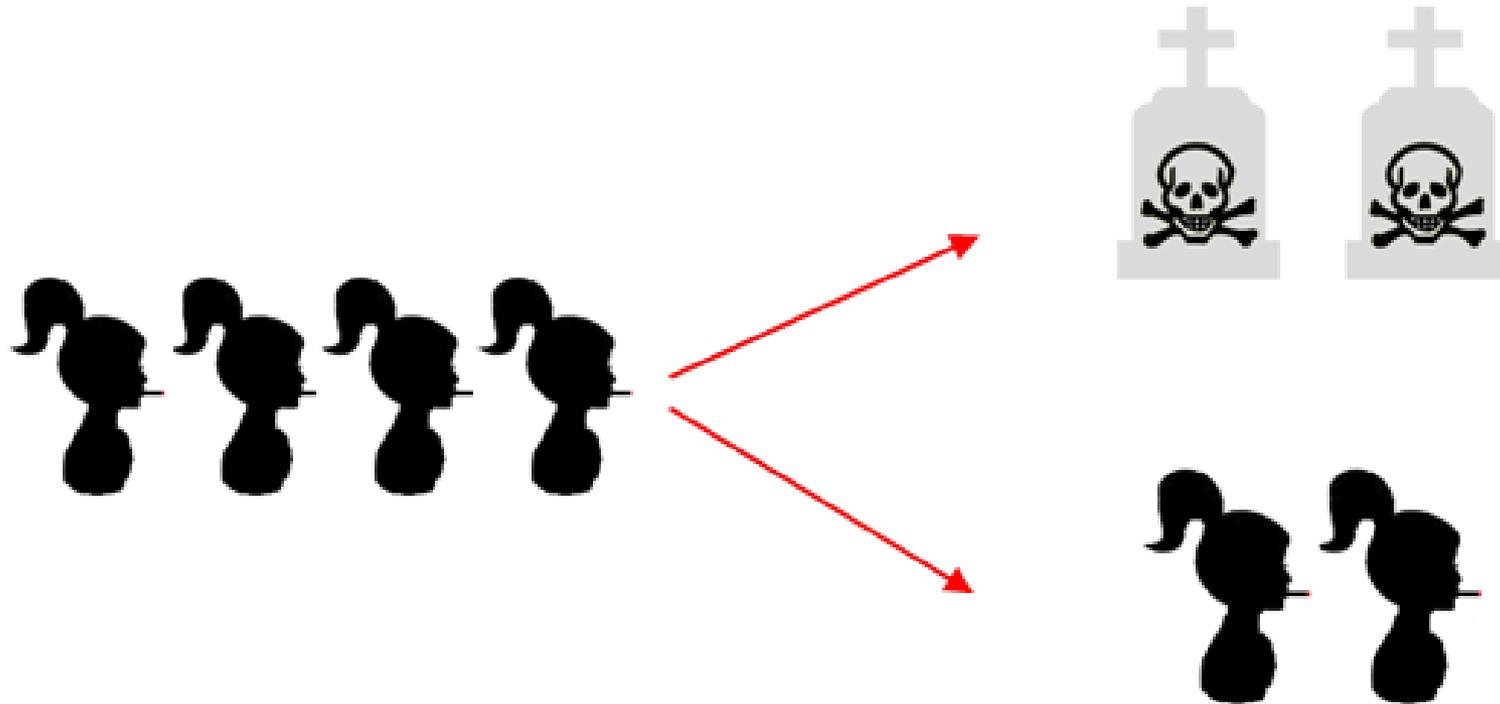


In elderly aged 65 or above, at least **ONE OUT OF TWO** smokers will be killed by smoking !



Results :

Effect of smoking on mortality in elderly women

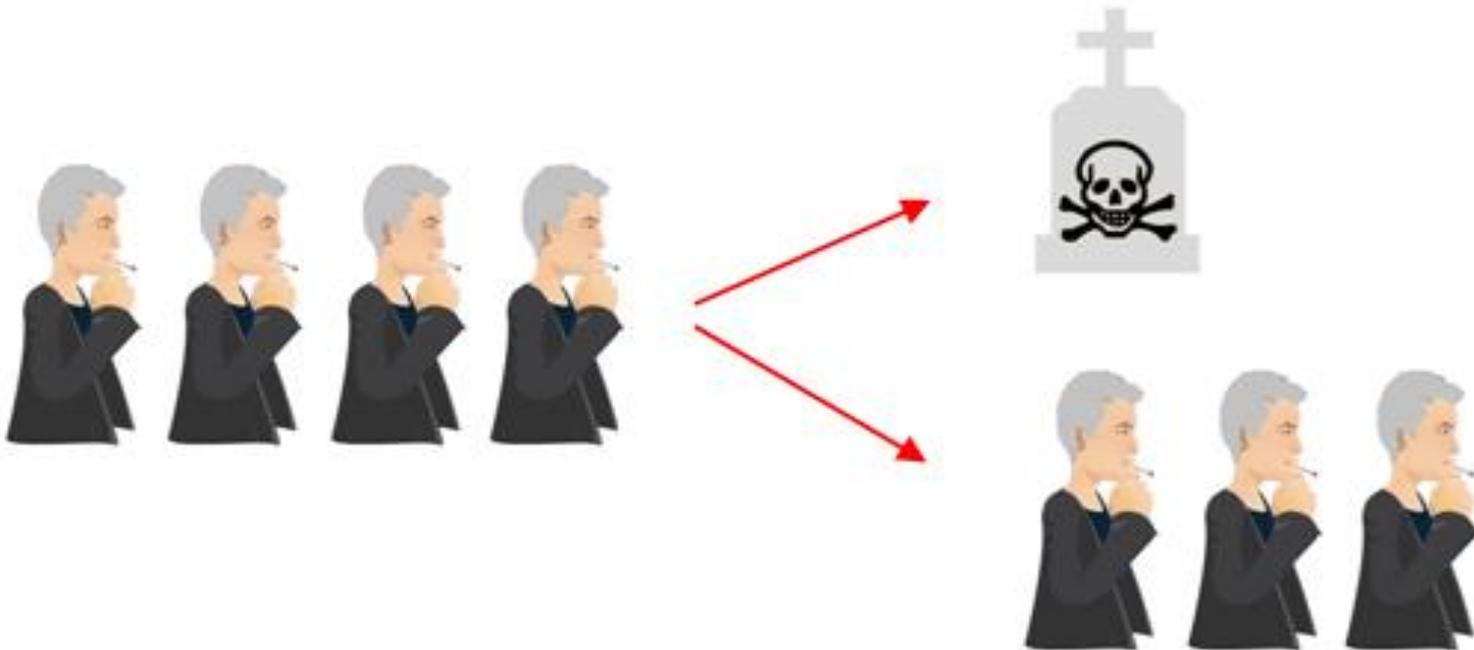


Women who smoke like men, die like men.



Results :

Effect of smoking on mortality in oldest smokers (85+)



In elderly aged 85 or above, **ONE OUT OF FOUR** smokers will be killed by smoking-related diseases. Compared to non-smokers, the risk of all-causes increased by 29%.



Study implications & Suggestions

- Smoking cessation can significantly reduce risk of all-causes, lung cancer and CVD mortality, suggest quitting smoking at old age still benefits elderly's health.
- Elderly should **quit smoking immediately** to reduce mortality risk.
- **Increase in tobacco tax** can encourage smoking cessation in senior citizens, as a result improving health and prolonging life.



Suggestion by WHO

World Health Organisation (WHO) :



“Increasing the price of tobacco products through significant tax increases is the single most effective way to decrease tobacco use and to encourage current users to quit.” (WHO, 2009)



Smoking Cessation: Health benefits

- The risk to have coronary heart diseases (CHD) is reduced by half after stopping smoking for 1 year, similar to those who never smoke after 15 years.
- Lung cancer risk of continuing smokers is reduced to 30-50% after stopping smoking for 10 years.
- Quitting before the age of 50 reduces risk of dying in the next 15 years by a half, compared with continuing smokers.
- Reduces risks of other cancers and diseases.

Source: (US DHHS 1990)



Smoking Cessation: Instant Benefits

- 20 min Lower blood pressure & improvement in circulation
- 8 hour Normal blood oxygen
- 24 hour Removal of nitric oxide
- 48 hour Clearance of nicotine
- 72 hour Improvement in respiration & physical function



Smoking Cessation: Other Benefits

- Improving sense of taste & smell
- Fresh breath
- Improving image
- Senses of success and freedom
- Role model for children
- Improving social relationship: family, work
- Saving money



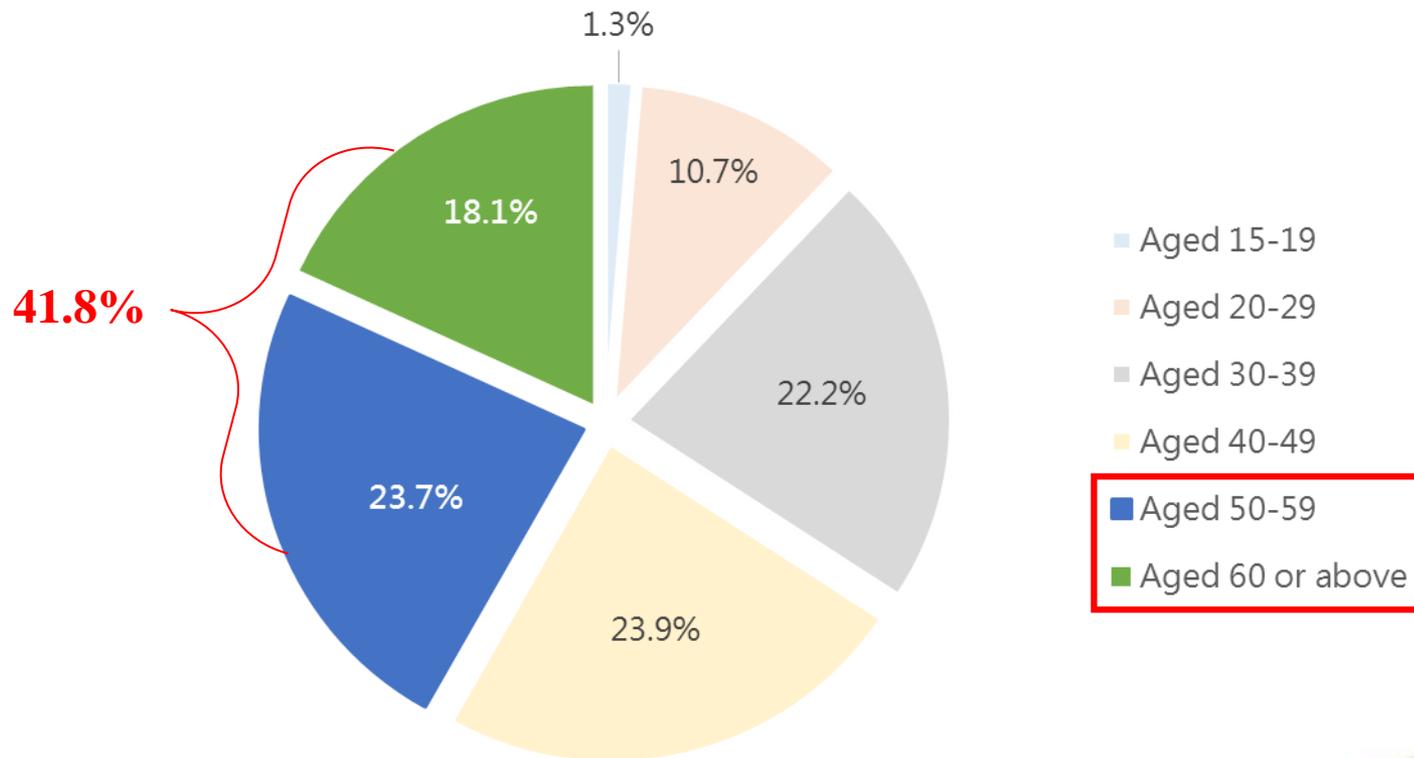
Acknowledgements

The surveys were supported by

- Health Care & Promotion Fund Committee

Elderly Smoking in Hong Kong

Daily Smoking Population (645,000 smokers)

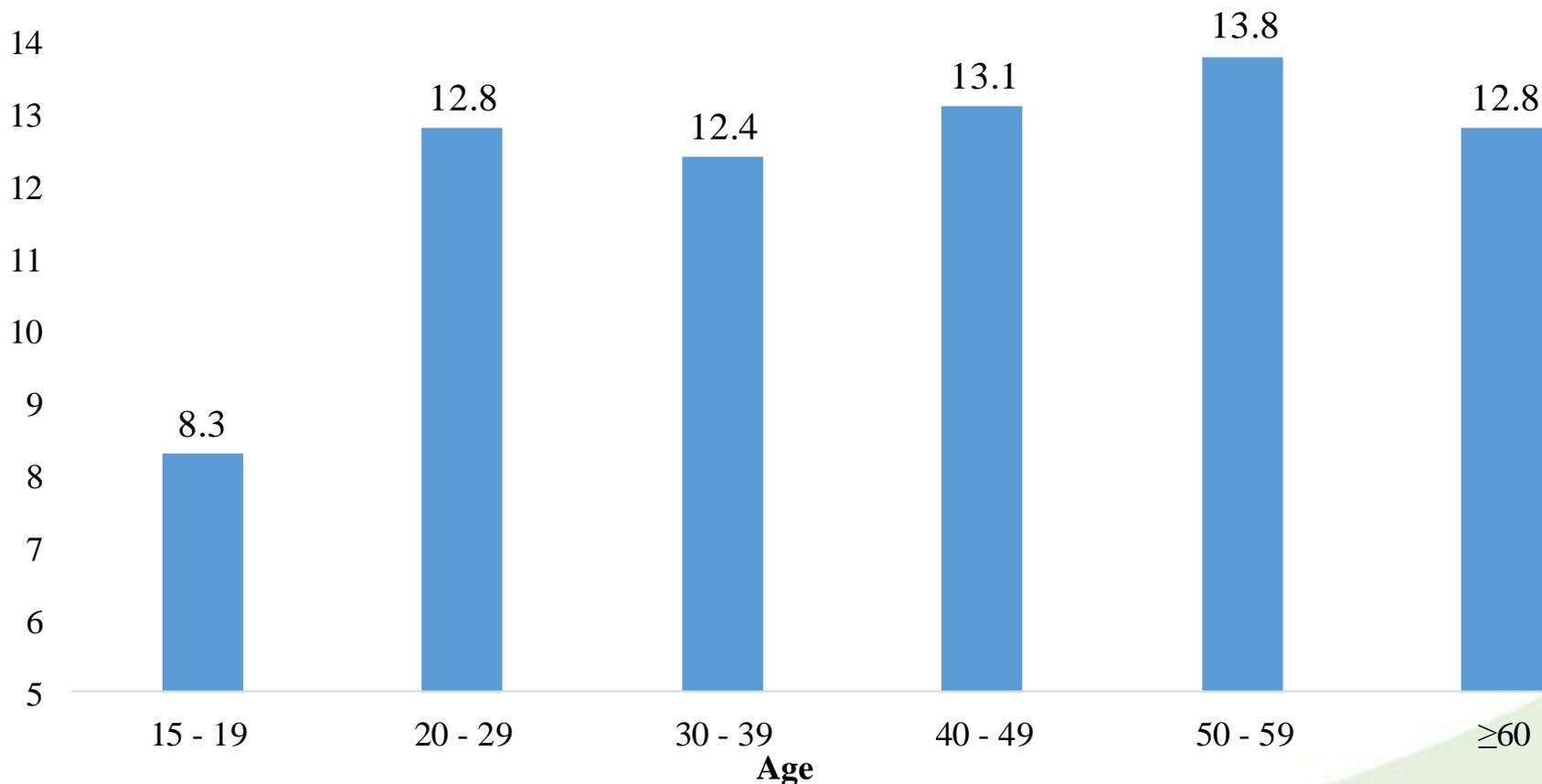


Source: Thematic Household Survey Report No.53, Census and Statistics Department, 2013



Elderly Smoking in Hong Kong

Average daily consumption of cigarettes among smokers (sticks) by age

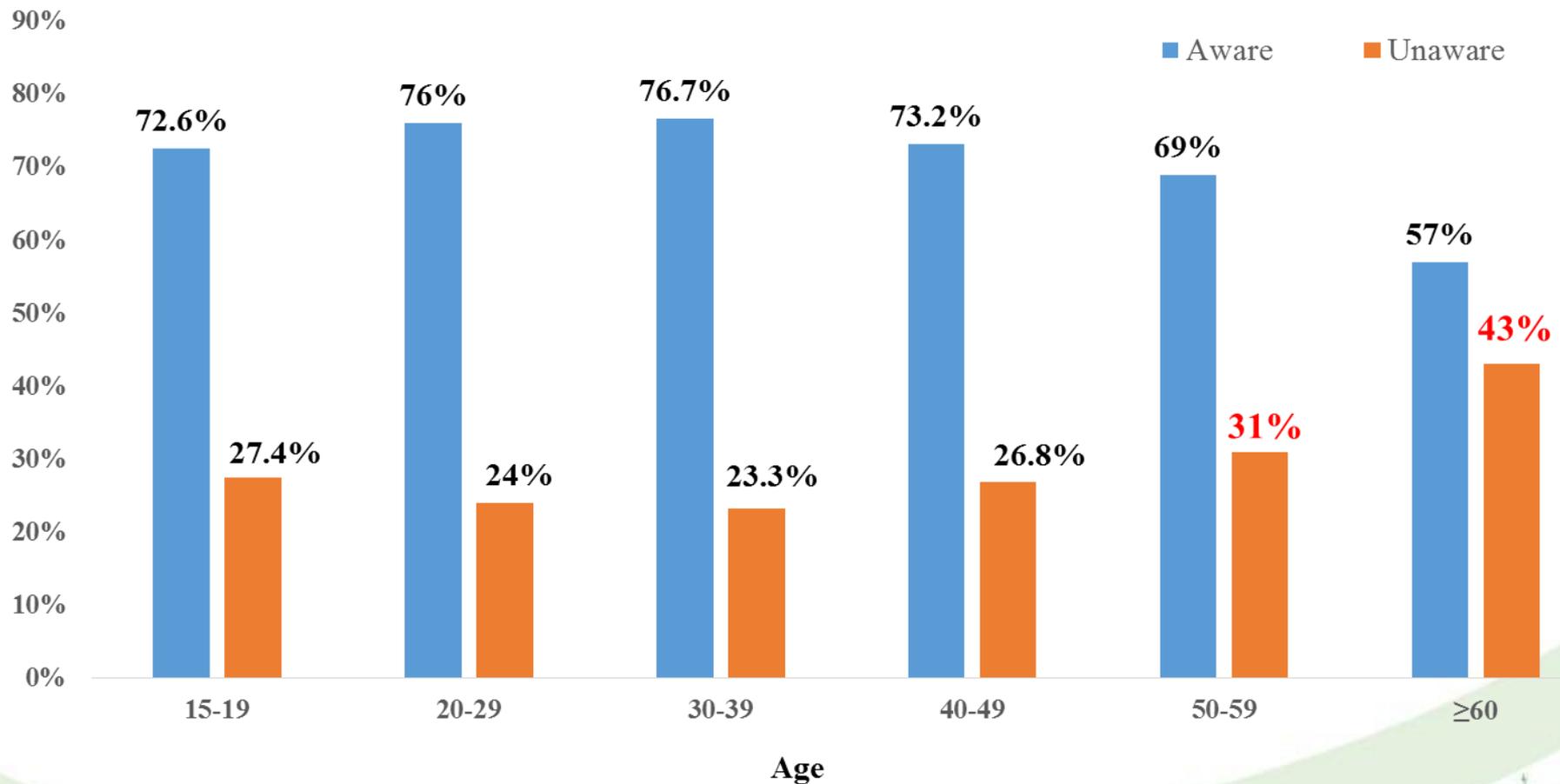


Source: Thematic Household Survey Report No.53, Census and Statistics Department, 2013



Elderly Smoking in Hong Kong

Awareness of the smoking cessation services among smokers by age



Source: Thematic Household Survey Report No.53, Census and Statistics Department, 2013



Elderly Smoking Cessation Promotion Project

- COSH has organized the “Smoking Cessation Promotion Project” since 2012.
- Target at early retired people and elderly at age 50 or above. The project is composed of Health Talks, Media Advocacy and Community Promotion with following objectives:
 - Enhance elderly’s understanding on smoking hazards and benefits of smoking cessation;
 - Clarify the misconceptions and encourage smoking cessation; and
 - Motivate the public, especially the elderly to support smoke-free Hong Kong

無煙老友記計劃

Elderly Smoking Cessation Promotion Project



Elderly Smoking Cessation Promotion Project

1. Health Talk

- Conducted by the educators in an interesting and interactive way at the elderly centres across the territory
- Nearly 90% of participating centres gave positive comments (2013-2014)



Elderly Smoking Cessation Promotion Project

2. Media Promotion and Publicity

- Radio programme and promotion

The screenshot shows the rthk.hk website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for '主頁', '電台', '電視', 'Web+', '新聞', '直播', and '節目重溫'. Below this, the '第五台' (Channel 5) is selected, and the '香江暖流' program is highlighted. The main content area displays the program's details, including the date '2014-11-04', the host '袁翠霞、盧世昌、錢佩佩、阮德謙', and a list of episodes with their titles and broadcast times.

Time	Program Title	Details
1000-1100	「耆樂無窮：長歌」	歡迎長者聽眾來電 1872312 點唱
1100-1130	「生活全接觸」	主題：「靈實長者記憶護理中心」 嘉賓：基督教靈實協會護士顧問李麗珍姑娘
1130-1230	「無煙老友記計劃啟動儀式」	節目重溫
1230-1300	「耆樂無窮：短歌」	歡迎長者聽眾來電 1872312 點唱

The screenshot shows the rthk.mine mobile app interface. The top navigation bar includes the 'rthk.mine' logo and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there is a video player showing a woman in a yellow shirt. The video title is '足本重溫 主持人：盧世昌 香江暖流 糖妹：食煙no way!'. Below the video player, there is a description: '女生都愛美，糖妹勸女生戒煙，果然...! 歡迎收聽《香江暖流》，重溫本年度的「長者無煙大使訓練課程」。' At the bottom, there are navigation icons for '主頁', '直播', '最愛', and '交通'.

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Elderly Smoking Cessation Promotion Project

- “Smoking Cessation Pledge Ceremony” (2013-2014)



Elderly Smoking Cessation Promotion Project

- Launch Ceremony of “Elderly Smoking Cessation Promotion Project 2014-2015”



Elderly Smoking Cessation Promotion Project

Community Smoke-free Promotion

- Strengthen the cooperation with elderly centres and recruit elderly volunteers to encourage elderly smokers to quit smoking
- Elderly volunteers attended the smoking cessation training and delivered smoke-free messages to public



Elderly Smoking Cessation Promotion Project

Health Talk (2012-15)

Participating elderly centres	95
Number of participants	~6,300

Community Smoke-free Promotion (2014-15)

Elderly Smoke-free Ambassador	50
Community Smoke-free Promotion	8 times
Smokers attempted to quit	60
Members of public reached	~3,000



Advocacy – Raise Awareness on Elderly Smoking and Encourage Smoking Cessation

Promote smoke-free messages among the elderly

- Educate the elderly on health hazards of smoking
- Highlight the benefits of smoking cessation and clarify the common misconceptions
- Tailor-made marketing strategies for the elderly to raise their awareness on smoking cessation



Advocacy – Raise Awareness on Elderly Smoking and Encourage Smoking Cessation

Raise the public awareness toward elderly smoking

- Raise public awareness on elderly smoking in communities
- Strengthen the support and involvement of the community to spread the smoke-free messages
- Encourage family members to motivate and assist elderly to quit



Thank You!

Visit www.smokefree.hk for more information

繁體 简体 A A A

CASH
香港吸煙與健康委員會
HONG KONG COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH

Just Quit! You can do it!

ABOUT US OUR WORK SMOKING: RISK & CESSATION TOBACCO CONTROL E-ZONE & DOWNLOAD CONTACT US

Information Corner Upcoming Event Smoking Cessation Smoke Free Hong Kong

SEARCH & TAGS
e.g. Smoking; Cessation;
All

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Cancer **mpower**
secondhand
smoking Smoking
Thirdhand smoking tobacco tax
Health Talk **Tobacco**
tax Thirdhand smoke

Smoking during pregnancy could harm future fertility of the next male generation
2014.12.02

無煙老方記
Elderly Smoking Cessation Promotion Project 2014-15 Launch Ceremony Promote smoke-free lifestyle and smoking cessation with the elderly

開心大少的



Q & A Session