

COVID-19 and smoking: A comment

Dear Editor,

We found that the publication on “COVID-19 and smoking: A systematic review of the evidence” is very interesting.^[1] Vardavas and Nikitara noted that “*smoking is most likely associated with the negative progression and adverse outcomes of COVID-19.*”^[1] We would like to share ideas on this specific issue on COVID-19 and smoking. There are some recent reports on this issue. Lang *et al.* noted that “*While data on the association between COVID-19 and tobacco products is mixed, the overall health consequences of tobacco point towards increased risk of morbidity and mortality associated with the virus.*”^[2] Some COVID-19 patients have clear history that smoking altogether in a group is the risk behavior contributing to infection. Nevertheless, there might be other confounding risks that can promote COVID-19 transmission. According to an earlier data from Thailand, the second country that the outbreak first occurs, about 3.9% of the patients are regular smokers but there is no death in this group and the cluster of COVID-19 among smokers who have sharing smoking behavior is observed.^[3] In another report from Italy, 35.5% of COVID-19 patients are smokers but there is no data on the association between smoking and mortality.^[4] In that report, the lack of association between smoking- and COVID-19-related smell and taste problem is mentioned.^[4] An important consideration is the lack of case-control study to address the effect of smoking on COVID-19. The data on smoking among COVID-19 are usually not available and it usually lacks for the data on the secondary smoking. The effect of getting cigarette smoke from others might not be recognized and its effect on COVID is usually interesting. Smoker usually exhales out cigarette smoke and the contaminated exhaled air can cause disease spreading.^[5] It should add that smoking is not only cause poor disease course but also an important behavior promoting transmission of COVID-19. New researchers also show the possible molecular role of smoking by increasing receptor activity to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 virus.^[6] Increase pulmonary

inflammation and impaired repairing during COVID-19 illness is proposed in patients who are smokers.^[7] Finally, it should also note that smoking is also a proven risk for mental problem among general people during COVID-19 outbreak situation.^[8]

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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