

A Study on Cigarette Smoking and Bladder Cancer

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Perspective

Received: 01-Mar-2023,
Manuscript No. RCT-23- 94012;
Editor assigned: 06-Mar -2023,
PreQC No. RCT-23- 94012 (PQ);
Reviewed: 20-Mar-2023, QC No.
RCT -23- 94012; **Revised:** 27-
Mar-2023, Manuscript No. RCT -
23- 94012 (R); **Published:** 31-
Mar -2023, DOI: 10.4172/Rep
cancer Treat.7.1.006.

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Citation: Hawkins M. A Study on
Cigarette Smoking and Bladder
Cancer. 2023; 7: 006.

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Cigarette smoking causes cancer in at least 15 different parts of the body, including the bladder. Smoking causes roughly half of all bladder cancers in both men and women in the United States, making it the leading preventable risk factor, far ahead of workplace exposure to industrial chemicals. The higher the risk, the more you smoke. The risk of bladder cancer increases with smoking duration (the number of years you have smoked) and intensity (the number of cigarettes smoked per day), with duration having a greater effect. Overall, smokers are at least three times more likely to develop bladder cancer than non-smokers.

An analysis of data from multiple previously published studies (known as a meta-analysis) discovered that current smokers had a 3.5 times higher risk of bladder cancer than non-smokers, with former smokers having a 2 times higher risk. A second meta-analysis discovered a similar increase in bladder cancer risk for both male and female smokers, but a higher risk in European populations compared to Asian populations. Some genetic variants have also been linked to an increased risk of bladder cancer in smokers.

Second Hand Smoke (SHS), also known as involuntary smoking, exposes children, pets, and nonsmokers to the same carcinogens that smokers inhale. There is no safe level, but home and workplace exposure are particularly concerning, with nonsmokers exposed to SHS in these settings having a 20-30% increased risk of lung cancer. While more research is needed to confirm potential links to other cancers, and bladder cancer results have been inconsistent, a meta-analysis of 14 studies found that second-hand smoke exposure was associated with a 22% increase in bladder cancer risk.

