

Weight Gained after Smoking Cessation May Be Caused by Onset of Hypothyroidism

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ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY ● ● ● ● ●

The possible association of tobacco smoking and thyroid disease has been reported in the literature for some time, such as the higher incidence of goiter in smokers (1), risk of Graves' disease (2), development of autoimmune thyroiditis (3), and worsening of Graves' orbitopathy (4). However, several studies have had conflicting results with regard to smoking's relationship to hypothyroidism (5). The appearance of thyroid antibodies after smoking cessation has been reported (6). In the present study, the cases and controls showed no statistical differences between years of smoking, pack-years of smoking, and type of smoking. There was also no statistical difference between the two geographical areas, one with mild

iodine deficiency and the other with moderate iodine deficiency. The high incidence of autoimmune hypothyroidism within the first 2 years after smoking cessation is striking; the median serum TSH was 54.5 mU/L, and as compared with controls, patients newly diagnosed with hypothyroidism had a 7.5 kg higher body weight, which the authors attributed to fluid accumulation. Weight gain and tiredness are not unusual symptoms following tobacco cessation, and these are often attributable to "lack of nicotine." Advising our patients to quit cigarette smoking is a routine recommendation in our daily medical practice. Perhaps we clinicians should pay more attention to our patients' medical history and keep in mind the possibility of hypothyroidism as the cause of symptoms that appear after smoking cessation.

References

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