Patterns of Posting Behaviour in an Online Cessation Community

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Improving online help to quit

Engagement with an online cessation support network (OCSN) is associated with higher smoking abstinence rates within web-assisted tobacco interventions²,³.

OCSNs also have wide reach, 24/7 availability and low marginal cost. Hence, improvements in their efficacy may have high value. Yet little is known about how OCSNs users interact.⁴ Such knowledge could inform development of innovations to increase individual engagement with the OCSN community, thus increasing the likelihood users become and remain smokefree.

We analysed the posting behaviour of quitters using NZs Quit blogs (maintained by Quitline) to inform future interventions.

Data included 134,663 OCSN interactions over 2011-12. Metrics covered aggregate network activity, user posting activity and longevity, and between-user commenting.

Opportunities in repeated patterns

Low activity periods such as the festive season and the end of the week suggest opportunities for targeted messaging at potential times of high relapse risk.

Potential directions for interventions

Our exploratory results suggest interventions to:

• Offering quitters smokefree tips near the end of the week or during festive periods may reduce relapse;
• Re-engaging quitters who post infrequently during their first week may promote greater interaction and more successful quit attempts;
• Re-activating those who cease posting may stimulate more frequent and, ultimately, more successful quit attempts;
• Directing HAUs’ activity toward these aims may support and amplify OCSN success as their involvement in, and endorsement of, intervention innovations may be crucial.

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See more research at http://aspire2025.org.nz