

Press release information for UKNSCC 2008

Strict embargo: 00.01hrs

Monday June 30, 2008

No place for hypnotherapy and acupuncture in an evidence based NHS Stop Smoking Service

Smokers wishing to quit would be wasting their money if they use complementary therapies such as hypnotherapy or acupuncture – smoking cessation experts claim today (Monday, June 30).

This and other issues around the most effective ways to help smokers quit will be discussed at the UK National Smoking Cessation Conference in Birmingham on 30 June & 1 July 2008.

Dr Andy McEwen, assistant director of tobacco studies at Cancer Research UK's Health Behaviour Research Centre and programme director for the conference, said: "There is no good research evidence to show that hypnotherapy or acupuncture increase a persons chance of stopping smoking. You may hear people who are convinced that these, or other complementary therapies, helped them stop smoking – but there is no way of knowing whether they would have stopped anyway."

"Anyone who is ready to quit would be more successful by getting in contact with their local NHS Stop Smoking Service for specialist advice and treatment. There is no easy way to stop smoking and if something seems too good to be true, it probably is."

Conference delegates will be debating the motion that 'This house believes that hypnotherapy and acupuncture should be treatments provided by NHS Stop Smoking Services'.

It is likely that the motion will be defeated if findings from the first Annual Smoking Cessation Practitioner Survey are an indication of what those in the field believe. An online survey of nearly 500 specialists working in NHS Stop Smoking Services found that 94 per cent would not recommend hypnotherapy, and 94 per cent would not recommend acupuncture, to smokers wanting to quit.

Smokers should beware of any treatment that claims to have a higher than 50 per cent short-term (i.e. four weeks after quitting) or 20 per cent long-term (i.e. after six months) success rate.

ENDS

For media enquiries please contact Andrew Preston on 07768 441796

References:

1. Abbot NC, Stead LF, White AR, Barnes J. Hypnotherapy for smoking cessation. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 1998, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD001008. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD001008.
2. White AR, Rampes H, Campbell JL. Acupuncture and related interventions for smoking cessation. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2006, Issue 1. Art. No.: CD000009. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD000009.pub2.

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Annual Smoking Cessation Practitioner (SCP) Survey information:

Online survey open to all Smoking Cessation Practitioners working in NHS Stop Smoking Services and carried out in May and June 2008. Survey was run by Dr Andy McEwen of the Cancer Research UK Health Behaviour Research Centre, University College London.

497 SCP responded to the survey. The full results of the Annual SCP Survey will be posted on the Smoking Cessation Research Network (SCSRN) website (www.scsrn.org) in August.

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UKNSCC 2008 Debate information:

Proposing: Maggie Chapman, Fellow of the British Society of Clinical Hypnosis

Amanda Shayle, Chairman of The Acupuncture Society and Research and Development, College of Chinese Medicine

Opposing: Paul Aveyard, NIHR Career Scientist, Department of Primary Care and General Practice, University of Birmingham, UK
Darcy Brown, Health Improvement Lead for Tobacco Control and Smoking Cessation, Darlington and Durham Dales PDA, UK