

An illustration of how brief interventions might have value in a health setting.

Approximately 1,181,500 people visit hospitals in Australia each year (including inpatient, outpatient, emergency and day clinics)<sup>1</sup> every year.

The current rate of smoking in Australia is 16.6% (around 196,000 of these people).

By extrapolation, if health workers were to conduct smoking brief interventions for all patients who visited hospital, and we could apply a modest stopping rate of about 5%, around 9,400 people per year would quit smoking who otherwise would have continued. Of course, the number of smokers who visit hospital is likely to be higher than 16.6% because smokers experience more ill-health.

Theoretically then, if the results of this study were replicated for patients in Australian hospitals, approximately **588** people (0.3% of 196,000) would have stopped smoking at one month and would still be not smoking at one year if they were offered no intervention during their time in hospital. However, if health workers were to conduct brief interventions for tobacco smoking patients who visited hospital, the proportion of people who would have stopped smoking at one month and still not smoking in one year would be approximately **10,000** (588 x 17). This number may be higher given that smokers are more likely to visit hospital than non smokers. It is important to stress this is provided as a simple illustration – it is not intended to provide direct and firm evidence of quit rates.

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<sup>1</sup> ABS National Health Summary 2004-2005