The Quarterly Fix

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What’s New with C-STOP?

The Final Stretch!
Since the study inception in July 2006, when we enrolled our first CSTOP participant, my staff has worked tremendously to keep up a pace of enrolling 10 or more smokers in this trial each month. Thirty-three months later, we now need to cease enrolling new participants.

I would like to extend my appreciation to the men and women who have participated in this exciting trial which aims to examine a potential new treatment for tobacco dependence. By this summer and fall, we will be able to answer some of our study questions on whether naltrexone may improve smoking quit rates, and if so, for which smokers. We will keep you updated in future newsletters once we have some answers.

In the meantime, for your friends, family, or colleagues who wish to quit smoking, see page 2 for some excellent and low-cost referrals to smoking cessation programs in the Chicago area. Information will be forthcoming for a low-cost individual stop-smoking cessation program at University of Chicago, which should begin in April or May 2009. We are taking a waiting list now.

Where Do We Go From Here?
In the next year, if you indicated you were interested, you will receive a letter in the mail indicating whether you received naltrexone or placebo in the study. We have to wait until every last participant is completed.

Modest Drinking Decreases Disability Risk

A recent study published in the Journal of American Epidemiology found that older adults who were light/moderate drinkers had a lower risk of developing physical disabilities. Dr. Alison Moore, one of the study investigators at the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA), suggested that one drink (equivalent to 12oz. of beer or a 5 oz glass of wine) 5-6 times a week may help delay physical impairments. Though the reason is unclear, Moore proposed that one reason may be due to the association of light drinking with decreased risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and increased lifespan.

Investigators at UCLA followed 4276 healthy U.S. adults, 50 years old and older for 5 years. Participants classified as light/moderate drinkers had <15 drinks per week, with up to 1-2 drinks a day. At the end of 5 years, 15% developed some kind of impairment for daily physical tasks, including walking, bathing, and daily errands. Both men and women who drank moderately from the start of the study were 25% less likely than abstainers to develop disability. However, improvement was limited to adults without any past history of major medical problems. For seniors already in poorer health, UCLA researchers speculated that alcohol may have no protective effect and perhaps worsen physical health.

Source: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29036704/

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When tested in the afternoon, the nap group performed significantly better on the finger tapping exercise and word recall task than the both the caffeine and placebo groups. Interestingly, there were no significant differences in performance between those who received placebo and those who took a caffeine pill. These findings contribute to evidence suggests that, while caffeine may help with general alertness and concentration, it may also interfere with tasks that require processing explicit information, such as the word recall task used here, which required participants to remember words they had heard 7 hours before. In light of these findings, Sara Mednick, who heads UCSD’s research group, cautions against using caffeine as a substitute for sleep, as “no medicinal alternative to a good night’s rest has been discovered.”


Questions? Contact us! Call 1-877-C-STOP-911 or visit our website at www.stopsmoking.uchicago.edu