

Smoking Decreases Work Productivity for Cancer Survivors

Cancer survivors who currently smoked were more likely to report any missed workdays than those who never smoked.

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There has been limited research examining whether smoking is associated with labor force participation, inability to work, and missed workdays among cancer survivors in the United States. In a new study led by the [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS), scientists found that smoking increases health-related work productivity loss among this population group. The findings will be presented at the annual [American Society of Clinical Oncology \(ASCO\) Quality Care Symposium](#) in Chicago, October 10-11, 2025.

Researchers, led by senior author [Dr. Zhiyuan \(Jason\) Zheng](#) at the American Cancer Society, analyzed data from the National Health Interview Survey (2013-2019 and 2022-2023) to identify 8,203 cancer survivors aged 18-64 years who currently smoked, had formerly smoked, or had never smoked. Associations with smoking status were assessed for productivity loss measures, including labor force participation (working or seeking employment), inability to work due to health issues, and any missed workdays. Researchers also examined the association of smoking status and the number of missed workdays.

The study results showed that 1,793 (19.7%) participants currently smoked, 2,189 (26.5%) had formerly smoked, and 4,221 (53.5%) had never smoked. In adjusted analyses, the labor force participation rate was similar across smoking statuses, but the inability to work due to health issues varied significantly. Compared to survivors who never smoked, those who formerly smoked and currently smoked were more likely to report an inability to work due to health issues, respectively. Moreover, survivors who currently smoked were more likely to report any missed workdays than those who never smoked and experienced a higher number of missed workdays compared to those who formerly smoked.

Researchers emphasized that smoking cessation efforts can improve health and reduce productivity loss among working-age cancer survivors.

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