Author’s response to reviews

Title: Does deterioration in mental health after cessation predict relapse?

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Dear editor,

We are submitting a manuscript that examines whether smokers whose mental health deteriorates after cessation are at greater risk of relapse. Many people have proposed that smokers self-medicate with tobacco and that deterioration of mental health will predispose to return for smoking for these people.

Recently, a meta-analysis showed evidence that smoking cessation was associated with improvements in mental health. However, it is possible that some quitters experience improved mental health after smoking cessation and therefore remain abstinent, whereas, other quitters may experience worse mental health after cessation and therefore be more likely to relapse.

Our study showed there was no greater tendency to relapse for those whose mental health worsened up to four months after cessation compared with those who had no change or an improvement. Our findings represent the strongest evidence yet that there is no increased risk of relapse for those whose mental health worsens. It provides reason to believe that the apparent improvement in mental health on cessation is likely to apply to all smokers who become abstinent.

Kind regards,
Dr Gemma Taylor PhD

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