





LETTER TO EDITOR

Comment on: Smoking and quitting behavior of hospitalized COVID-19 patientsAyşe AYYILDIZ¹  , Özge TURGAY YILDIRIM²  ¹ Eskişehir City Hospital, , Department of Intensive Care, Eskişehir, Turkey² Eskişehir City Hospital, , Department of Cardiology, Eskişehir, Turkey**ABSTRACT**

We read the article by Önder et al entitled “Smoking and quitting behavior of hospitalized COVID-19 patients” with great interest. The article is a very well-written article that emphasizes smoking behaviors in hospitalized COVID-19 patients and addresses a current and significant public health concern. Although this is a well-designed and valuable study, we would like to address some points that merit more attention.

Keywords: COVID-19, smoking, intensive care

ÖZET**Yorum: “Hastaneye yatırılan COVID-19 hastalarının sigara içme ve bırakma davranışları”**

Önder ve arkadaşlarının “Hastaneye yatırılan COVID-19 hastalarının sigara içme ve bırakma davranışları” başlıklı makalesini büyük bir ilgiyle okuduk. Makale, hastanede yatan COVID-19 hastalarında sigara içme davranışlarını vurgulayan, güncel ve önemli bir halk sağlığı sorununa değinen çok iyi yazılmış bir makaledir. Her ne kadar iyi tasarlanmış ve değerli bir çalışma olsa da üzerinde daha fazla durulması gereken bazı noktalara değinmek istiyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: COVID-19, sigara, yoğun bakım

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We read the article by Önder et al entitled “Smoking and quitting behavior of hospitalized COVID-19 patients” with great interest [1]. The article is a very well-written article that emphasizes smoking behaviors in hospitalized COVID-19 patients and addresses a current and significant public health concern. Although this is a well-designed and valuable study, we would like to address some points that merit more attention.

Smoking remains one of the most pressing public health challenges today, and unfortunately, despite extensive efforts, significant progress in combating smoking has not been achieved [2,3]. The study by Önder et al. addresses this critical issue by exploring the relationship between COVID-19 and smoking, a topic that remains highly relevant [1]. The COVID-19 pandemic has not only changed the routine practice of

people all over the world, but also human habits, the doctor's approach to the patient, and treatment compliance [4-9]. This comprehensive and detailed study not only investigates smoking cessation during the pandemic but also provides valuable insights through a 6-month follow-up period [1].

The study's clear narrative, adherence to ethical standards, and in-depth analysis enhance its significance. Furthermore, by examining health anxiety and its association with smoking cessation during the pandemic, the study offers a unique and timely perspective on this pressing public health issue [1].

The study focused exclusively on COVID-19 patients hospitalized in the ward. It included follow-up data on their transition to intensive care and mortality rates, demonstrating a robust evaluation methodology. However, the study's exclusion criteria were highly selective. Patients hospitalized in intensive care and

those with significant illness or disability were excluded, which created a notable limitation [1]. Excluding critically ill patients, who are inherently at a higher risk, resulted in the inability to assess the impact of smoking on the prognosis of severe COVID-19 cases. This exclusion could lead to an underestimation of the potential risks associated with smoking during the COVID-19 pandemic. Including patients hospitalized in intensive care in future studies would enrich the data and provide a more comprehensive understanding of smoking's role in severe cases, allowing for more accurate conclusions about its impact during the pandemic. For example; a meta-analysis published in 2023 examined disease progression and mortality due to COVID-19 among never-smokers, ex-smokers, and current smokers. The study revealed that smokers and ex-smokers have a 30-50% increased risk of severe outcomes compared to never-smokers [10].

In conclusion, while there are some aspects of the study that could be further refined, the work by Önder et al. is a commendable effort to explore the relationship between smoking behaviors and COVID-19 [1]. The findings provide an important foundation for future research and highlight the potential for hospitalization to serve as a critical opportunity for smoking cessation interventions. The authors' dedication to addressing a significant public health issue is evident, and their work contributes meaningfully to the growing body of knowledge on this topic. I hope this study inspires further research in this area and encourages healthcare professionals to continue integrating smoking cessation efforts into patient care strategies.

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