

Expert perspectives on embedding smoking cessation into an Australian lung cancer screening program

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Introduction / Issues: Targeted lung cancer screening (LCS) presents a unique 'teachable moment' for smoking cessation among a high-risk population; in Australia, eligible LCS participants will have a >30 pack-year smoking history. We sought perspectives from tobacco control/smoking cessation experts on how smoking cessation interventions can be optimally embedded into an Australian LCS program.

Method / Approach: Recruitment was via maximum variation and snowball sampling, including two experts from Aotearoa/New Zealand. Individual/group interviews included a structured evidence summary about international LCS trials, covered potential delivery models, and implementation barriers and facilitators. An analytical framework, guided by the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research, was developed through a collaborative coding process by six researcher and consumer advocate authors.

Key Findings: Experts (N=30) generally advocated for a 'hybrid' smoking cessation support pathway (with some dedicated services embedded within the LCS program and others accessed via external referral) to maximise cessation support uptake and cost-effectiveness. Specialised training on cessation intervention delivery for program staff, role clarity, and buy-

in from all levels of leadership (with funding commitments) were emphasised as workforce requirements. Experts discouraged unnecessary duplication of current smoking cessation resources, and highlighted implementation efforts as a priority. It was suggested that organised LCS could leverage tobacco control initiatives (e.g., mass media), normalise routine cessation support offers, and counter perceived stigma.

Discussions and Conclusions: Smoking cessation support was viewed as essential in Australian LCS, but implementation strategies require careful planning. To maximise acceptability, pre-implementation studies seeking LCS-eligible consumer perspectives in Australia are now required.

Implications for Practice or Policy: There are significant opportunities to embed routine smoking cessation support into Australia's National LCS Program, to commence by mid-2025. Broader policy opportunities may be particularly relevant in this context (e.g., subsidised combination nicotine replacement therapy facilitated by a workforce with dedicated smoking cessation training).

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