

# Acceptability of a Text Message Program Provided Alongside Nicotine Replacement Products for Smoking Cessation in a Randomized Clinical Trial

Bridget C. Howard<sup>1</sup>, Josephine Ricciuti<sup>1</sup>, Simon Caldwell<sup>1</sup>, Hayden McRobbie<sup>1</sup>, Ryan J. Courtney<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia.

Presenter's email: [bridget.howard@unsw.edu.au](mailto:bridget.howard@unsw.edu.au)

**Introduction:** Behavioural support is recommended alongside smoking cessation pharmacotherapy treatments during a quit attempt. Text message quit support increases cessation rates but is typically used in isolation, and not in conjunction with pharmacotherapy support. This work explores the acceptability of a text message support program provided as part of a smoking cessation clinical trial alongside pharmacotherapy provision.

**Methods:** In a smoking cessation randomized controlled trial of nicotine vaping products (NVPs) versus nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), all participants (N=1048) were provided a 5-week text message program as behavioural quit support. The program comprised 112 texts and text frequency ranged from two to five texts per day. The text messages included information on the study products; tips for coping with nicotine withdrawal symptoms and product side effects; study progress updates; goals and planning; relapse prevention and motivational 'feel good' messages. Text messages included text, emojis, hyperlinks to videos or quit support websites and graphics interchange format (GIF) images and the program also incorporated a 'quit buddy' persona named Lou. Participants could opt-out of the text program at any time. Text program acceptability was measured via the opt-out rate and via a questionnaire at final 7-month follow-up telephone interview.

**Results:** 910 participants (87.1%) completed the text program (12.9% of participants opted out during the 5-week period). Of those who completed final follow-up for the study (N=866), 65.0% of participants rated the text program somewhat, very or extremely helpful at helping them to quit smoking and 66.2% of participants reported reading the majority of texts in the program (read 75% or more). Additional anecdotal qualitative feedback on the program (text replies from participants) will also be presented.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** The majority of participants completed the text program and many found it helpful in assisting them to quit smoking. These results show that text message support, alongside pharmacotherapy, is highly acceptable, perceived as helpful with a majority of texts read.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** Text messaging presents as a viable and low-cost platform to support pharmacotherapy use for smoking cessation.

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