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| **Title of Innovation in policy and practice presentation** (Sentence case)Dads in Gear: A novel approach to supporting dads to be healthy and smokefree |
| **Setting/problem**Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of chronic disease, and the prevalence of smoking among men is consistently higher than among women. Supporting men’s smoking cessation (SC), therefore, is a robust and meaningful intervention for improving men’s health and by extension the health of their families by reducing their exposure to secondhand smoke. There are few SC programs tailored for men. In the context of pregnancy, post-partum and parenting, efforts to support SC have targeted women. Yet male partner smoking reduces the chances of women’s SC and can negatively impact children’s health as well as men’s own health. There are also intergenerational connections to smoking. For example, children who grow up with fathers who smoke are at increased risk of smoking later in life. With shifting masculinities associated with contemporary fatherhood, fathers are confronted with the discrepancy between their efforts to be “good fathers” and their continued smoking, creating a window of opportunity for supporting SC. **Intervention**Dads in Gear (DIG) is the first gender-sensitized SC program to focus on fathers, and is distinctly original in its focus, structure and content. DIG leverages motivation associated with men’s aspirations to be good fathers and active role models, along with male peer support to engage men in healthy lifestyle behaviours. The DIG program integrates knowledge and skill development to support SC, along with competencies in fathering and physical activity to increase the success of quitting. During this group-based program, facilitators use creative, activity-based, and men-friendly approaches. Web-based resources as well as a facilitator program guide and training program support the program. In this session, we will describe the evidence-base informing the program, and illustrate how a gender-sensitized approach is reflected in design elements, content and style of delivery DIG program. **Outcomes**Experiences in implementing DIG indicate that this gender-sensitive approach effectively engages men in SC, builds confidence and engagement in fathering, and promotes physical activity to support both men’s health and family health. Based on this success, we have also adapted the DIG program for Indigenous fathers.**Implications**The DIG program supports the value of integrating gender-related influences in health promotion, and provides a model for gender-sensitizing other programs targeting men. **Preferred presentation format: Oral**  |