

Spanish Society of Pulmonology and Thoracic Surgery (SEPAR) Annual Campaign for 2007: The Year For Smoking Prevention and Control

Carlos A. Jiménez Ruiz, Ángela Ramos Pinedo, Juan Antonio Riesco Miranda, and Julio Ancochea Bermúdez

Spanish Society of Pulmonology and Thoracic Surgery (SEPAR)

In recent years the Spanish Society of Pulmonology and Thoracic Surgery (SEPAR), through the Respira Foundation (Fundación Respira), has carried out annual campaigns for the prevention and treatment of highly prevalent respiratory diseases.^{1,2} This initiative has enabled SEPAR and the Respira Foundation to increase their social impact in the general population in Spain and to fulfill one of their main objectives as a scientific society and foundation: to prevent morbidity and mortality associated with respiratory diseases by increasing awareness and informing the general population in Spain.

Smoking is currently considered to be a chronic, addictive disease, capable of causing premature death in over 50% of smokers.^{3,4} Recent findings indicate that smoking kills over 56 000 people in Spain each year.³ These same findings identify smoking as one of the main causes of respiratory disease in Spain, responsible for 87% of cases of lung cancer and 93% of cases of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).⁵ With this in mind, the Board of Directors of SEPAR agreed to designate 2007 as the Year of Smoking Prevention and Control.

The main objectives that we aim to accomplish throughout this year are as follows: to increase health education aimed at the general population in Spain about this disorder and its association with numerous respiratory diseases; to raise the awareness in public figures (politicians, journalists, actors, and other personalities) about the need to prevent and treat this process; and to spread the message that pharmacological treatments exist that are effective and safe to help smokers quit smoking. In order to meet these objectives, we have designed a complete plan of activities ranging from those with a scientific or research aim to those of a more social nature. We shall discuss some of them below.

Over the next few months, a pivotal scientific activity will be the preparation of new recommendations for treatment of smoking. The last recommendations on the treatment of smoking dependence, drawn up by the SEPAR Assembly on Tobacco Addiction, date back to 2003—and

formerly to 1999.^{6,7} In recent years, new tobacco cessation treatments have appeared, and the indications and use of existing treatments have undergone modifications.^{8,9} These new therapies call for the previous recommendations to be updated. But we would also like to include an undoubtedly pioneering aspect in this new edition: a reasoned and well-considered proposal, based on scientific evidence, about financing pharmacological treatments to stop smoking.

At the end of 2005, the SEPAR Assembly on Tobacco Addiction carried out a population-based qualitative study, involving 6800 questionnaires. The data obtained were representative of Spain in general and of each autonomous community, and focussed on the prevalence of passive smoking and the general population's attitudes towards it. Data were also obtained on the incidence of diseases associated with this process. The results have been presented at scientific meetings held by the Assembly on Tobacco Addiction in recent months and are pending publication.¹⁰⁻¹² However, the most striking data are the following: 29.5% of nonsmokers are subjected to environmental smoke from tobacco in their homes, 25.8% at work, and even more importantly, 17.8% of schoolchildren are exposed to tobacco smoke at school. We are convinced that these factors will have been modified since the implementation of the new law regulating tobacco consumption in Spain. Therefore, one of the main research activities that we would like to carry out throughout this year is a repetition of that study. SEPAR will be the only Spanish scientific society with access to real data about the impact of the new law regulating tobacco consumption in Spain.¹³

We have also designed a comprehensive plan for social communication, featuring a traveling campaign on board PLANETA RESPIRA. This enormous trailer will visit 30 Spanish cities (every autonomous community), handing out leaflets and information, and providing attractive, educational activities for the general public. An essential part of this campaign will be to ensure that these activities are constantly reported in the media. For this purpose, we have designed a program devoid of negative and prohibitionist images about tobacco consumption. Instead, we have focussed on issuing a positive message for young people about preventing smoking, and in particular on the need for smokers to seek medical assistance to quit smoking. We believe that the slogan chosen for this

Correspondence: Dr. C.A. Jiménez Ruiz.
Unidad Especializada en Tabaquismo.
Santa Cruz de Marcenado, 9. 28015 Madrid. España.
E-mail: victorina@ctv.es

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campaign suitably transmits these principles: "BREATHING. Your health is in the air."

In order to successfully achieve these objectives, we require the assistance of each and every member of our scientific society. Consequently, we have designed an organizational structure for this Year of Smoking Prevention and Control that will encourage everyone to participate, providing support for your activities through the various committees that have been set up. The Central Organizing Committee will consist of the coordinator for the year, the secretary and the treasurer, as well as all the members of the forum on smoking of the Spanish autonomous communities. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for the help that they are currently providing and will no doubt continue to provide in the future. There will also be an advisory committee, made up of members from each SEPAR committee (Science and Research, Institutional Relations, Education and Training, Conference, and Health Care Quality) and of representatives from assemblies closely related to smoking (oncology, nursing and physiotherapy, COPD, and smoking addiction). This committee will coordinate our efforts and those of SEPAR members working towards the same objectives.

Moreover, HRH the Princess of Spain has accepted the honorary presidency of SEPAR 2007 the Year of Smoking Prevention and Control.

We would like to end by expressing our gratitude to the various public health services at a local level, in the autonomous communities, and on a national scale, the pharmaceutical industry and private institutions, scientific societies, professional associations, and patients' associations collaborating with us for the SEPAR Year 2007. We are convinced, however, that none of this would be possible without your help as members of SEPAR and as health professionals interested in the prevention and control of this disease, the leading avoidable cause of death in Spain.

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