



Editorial

SEPAR – A Scientific Society Committed to Stopping the Smoking Epidemic[☆]



La SEPAR: determinación y compromiso de una sociedad científica ante la epidemia del tabaquismo

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Smoking is a highly prevalent, chronic, addictive disease, with a high relapse rate. It is a risk factor for a large number of diseases and the most significant single cause of preventable morbidity and mortality, killing 50,000 people every year in Spain. It is the most common cause of COPD and lung cancer, and an aggravating factor in many lung diseases.

Society looks to healthcare professionals to set an example for healthy living, and our professional ethics and responsibilities oblige us to make a stand against smoking.¹

For years now, pulmonologists, thoracic surgeons, nurses and physiotherapists, under the auspices of the Spanish Society of Pulmonology and Thoracic Surgery (SEPAR), have demonstrated their commitment to the fight to prevent and control smoking. Under the initiative of Dr. Coll Colomé, the first SEPAR Committee for the Prevention of Smoking was set up in the 1960s with the aim of helping healthcare professionals raise awareness of the dangers of smoking among the Spanish people.² The SEPAR Smoking special interest area was founded in 1992, beginning a long history of teaching, research and healthcare activities for the prevention and treatment of smoking. Over the past 20 years, SEPAR has made a major contribution to the drive to denormalize tobacco use in Spanish society, and SEPAR's efforts to eradicate, or at least reduce, smoking among its members (as demonstrated in this issue by Solano et al.³), clearly shows its commitment to fulfilling the exemplary role demanded by today's society.

SEPAR's leadership in the fight against the smoking epidemic and in raising awareness among the Spanish population is evidenced by high media profile of a large number of our anti-smoking experts. In addition, SEPAR professionals have advised both central and regional governments on smoking prevention and control strategies that culminated in today's anti-smoking laws.

Other areas in which healthcare professionals are involved in the diagnostic and therapeutic approach to smoking cessation include:

1. The publication of the first teaching guidelines on smoking, published by SEPAR 10 years ago.⁴ This led to the design of expert training courses that are now a standard for healthcare professionals from SEPAR and other Spanish and international scientific societies. More importantly, smoking prevention strategies have now been made a core subject in respiratory medicine specialist teaching programs.
2. An extensive and varied range of research activity, held up as a benchmark in this field, which has culminated in the creation of the Integrated Research Program on Smoking.
3. The publication of updated protocols, guidelines and consensus documents to be used as essential tools for healthcare professionals involved in smoking prevention and care of smokers.

As a result of these efforts, large numbers of SEPAR professionals are currently working to combat smoking in different healthcare and training settings. Indeed, the study published in this issue by Solano et al.³ on the prevalence and attitudes toward smoking among our own members is part of our objective to determine and expose the degree of commitment of our own members to model health behaviors.

Decidedly, then, the past and future role of SEPAR in spearheading the prevention and treatment of smoking is illustrated by the range of social, informative, institutional, teaching, healthcare and scientific activities that make up the current SEPAR Year of COPD and Smoking⁵ – proof, if proof is needed, of the dedication and commitment of our members summed up in the title of this editorial.

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