

## Parental Smoking and Lung Health in Childhood Cancer Survivors: What You Need to Know

Summarized by Maša Žarković and Grit Sommer

### What did we want to find out with our study?

We wanted to find out how many childhood cancer survivors are exposed to cigarette smoke at home and whether this can lead to respiratory problems.

### Why is this important?

Some children are more susceptible to respiratory problems due to cancer treatment than others. If someone smokes at home, this can lead to respiratory problems even in children without a history of cancer. There are hardly any studies on passive smoke exposure and respiratory problems in childhood cancer survivors. The stress caused by a serious illness in the family may make it more difficult for some parents to give up smoking. Better knowledge could help to think of targeted interventions during follow-up care and support affected families.

### What did we exactly do?

We sent questionnaires to parents of 1037 childhood cancer survivors who were 16 years old or younger and had survived at least 5 years after the cancer diagnosis. The questionnaire contained questions on persons smoking in the household and on respiratory problems of children, including chronic cough, asthma, or middle ear infections.

### What did we find out and what does this mean?

We found that almost every third child who survived cancer (31%) lived in a home where parents smoke. In the questionnaire, children exposed to household smoking reported respiratory problems more frequently than children from smoke-free households. These results show that it is important to support parents to create smoke-free homes. During follow-up care, smoking should be among the topics to be addressed to parents, and parents who smoke can be helped to find professional advice and support, such as via [www.stopsmoking.ch](http://www.stopsmoking.ch). This can help young cancer survivors stay healthy as they grow up.

**Further information:** [www.swiss-ccss.ch](http://www.swiss-ccss.ch)

**Reference:** Žarković M, Sommer G, Nigg C, Sláma T, Schneider C, Ansari M, von der Weid N, Schindera C, Kuehni CE. Parental smoking and respiratory outcomes in young childhood cancer survivors. *Pediatr Blood Cancer*. 2024 Sep 3:e31310. doi: 10.1002/pbc.31310. PMID: 39228077.

**You can find the full article in English [here](#)**

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