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## 5<sup>th</sup> PAD & Vascular European Days

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*No more vascular amputation!*

# 2018

**Smoking and Peripheral Arterial Disease**

### **Are you a smoker? - Check your legs!**

Cigarette smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causes many diseases, and reduces the health of smokers in general. Tobacco smoke contains a deadly mix of more than 7,000 chemicals; hundreds are harmful, and about 70 can cause cancer. Smoking causes about 90% of all lung cancer deaths and about 80% of all deaths from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Smoking is a risk factor for all regional manifestations of atherosclerosis, but it carries a greater risk for PAD than for coronary artery disease.

People who stop smoking greatly reduce their risk for disease and early death. Although the health benefits are greater for people who stop at earlier ages, there are benefits at any age.

Smoking cessation increases longterm survival in patients with PAD. In one study, the 10-year survival rate was 82% in former smokers compared with 46% in continuing smokers. In an other study, following vascular surgery, the survival rate is greater in former smokers than in those who continue smoking (66% vs 36%, respectively), approaching a 2-fold difference at 5 years. In addition to increased survival rate, some studies have suggested that symptoms of PAD improve. The incidence of rest pain, a manifestation of critical limb ischemia, decreases after smoking cessation. In one study, 16% of continuing smokers developed rest pain over the course of 7 years whereas none of the former smokers developed it during that time. Similarly, the amputation rates in those who continue to smoke are higher than in those who quit.

Therapies to promote smoking cessation include counseling and different drug therapies. Healthcare providers must enhance their efforts and target smoking cessation as a modifiable risk factor in patients with PAD and other manifestations of atherosclerosis.

### **Assess Your Cigarette Use!**

Fagerström test for Nicotine Dependence

Please answer the following questions:

1. How soon after you wake up do you smoke your first cigarette?  
3 - Within 5 minutes

- 2 - 6-30 minutes
- 1 - 31-60 minutes
- 0 - After 60 minutes

2. Do you find it difficult to refrain from smoking in places where it is forbidden (e.g. in church, at the library, cinema, etc.)?

- 1 - Yes
- 0 - No

3. Which cigarette would you hate to give up?

- 1 - The first one in the morning
- 0 - All the others

4. How many cigarettes/day do you smoke?

- 0 - 10 or less
- 1 - 11-20
- 2 - 21-30
- 3 - 31 or more

5. Do you smoke more frequently during the first hours after waking than during the rest of the day?

- 1 - Yes
- 0 - No

6. Do you smoke if you are so ill you are in bed most of the day?

- 1 - Yes
- 0 - No

Evaluation: 1-2= low dependence      3-4=low-to mod dependence      5-7= moderate dependence

8+= high dependence

### Scores and Advice

- Under 3 Your level of nicotine dependence is still low. You should act now before your level of dependence increases.
- 4-5 Your level of nicotine dependence is moderate. If you don't quit soon, your level of dependence on nicotine will increase until you may be seriously addicted. Act now to end your dependence on nicotine.
- 6-10 Your level of dependence is high. You aren't in control of your smoking– it is in control of you! When you make the decision to quit, you may want to talk with your doctor about nicotine replacement therapy or other medications to help you break your addiction.