

COVID-19 and Smoking – Prevention, outcomes and care

Smoking has been causally linked to greater incidence of infectious respiratory diseases in the US Surgeon General's report of 2004 and more recently with SARS, MERS and H1N1 and often linked to poorer outcomes. While the benefits of smoking cessation in 'well populations' have been well recognised, there is emerging evidence that smoking cessation at any stage, post serious disease, provides significant survival benefits. Yet the role of smoking and cessation in infectious respiratory disease has been largely overlooked.

Can COVID-19 provide an opportunity to highlight the role of smoking?
Emerging epidemiological studies on COVID-19 have been largely focusing on clinical risk factors and outcomes, but these have the hallmarks of smoking in the background. In a rapidly evolving field, I will attempt to summarise what we currently know about COVID-19 and smoking, what we can infer from analogy and from common sense. We can then discuss working hypotheses moving forward and actionable suggestions on messaging for prevention, clinical risks and post hospital care.

The School of Public Health
and Community Medicine

Seminar Invitation

Wednesday 27th May

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Seminar will be available by
Teams Meeting Link



Venue: Seminar available by Microsoft Teams Link and will be recorded

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Organisation: Seminars organised by Professor Robyn Richmond. Higher Degree student seminars organised by Poshan Thapa
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About Associate Professor Freddy Sitas

Freddy Sitas has a D.Phil in Epidemiology and is the Director at the Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity at the School of Public Health and Community Medicine UNSW. He is Associate Professor the Menzies Centre for Health Policy at School of Public Health, University of Sydney and Burden of Disease Research Unit at MRC South Africa. He has a 25-year track record quantifying the role of smoking, certain infections and their relationship to cancer and premature mortality. The reason is that that these two exposures account for about half the deaths from cancer or a fifth of chronic diseases worldwide and there are proven pathways to prevent these. He led the effort to add questions on smoking on the South African death certificate, showing TB as the leading cause attributed to smoking in black South Africans. The method is now copied by ChinaCDC in Tianjin. While Research Director at Cancer Council NSW he developed the funding case for the 45 and Up Study now used by over 150 groups. He was a member of WHO-IARC editorial / Working Groups on Cancer in Africa, Carcinogenicity of Tobacco, Biological Agents, and chairs the Efficacy section of the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia's Working Group on smoking cessation in cancer patients.