

SmokeLess New Zealand

www.smokeless.org.nz info@smokeless.org.nz

Printable version: www.smokeless.org.nz/snusaidsquitting.pdf

Snus – an effective short- and long-term stop-smoking aid

Snus is a gateway drug away from smoking for young people, and helps adults quit.

Summary

For quitting, randomised controlled trials to test whether snus is a superior short-term aid and long-term aid to stop smoking are feasible, but have not been conducted. Available evidence shows that in Sweden and the US, the only two OECD countries where cigarettes and snuff are used widely, smokers use snus/smokeless as an aid to quit smoking, and those that do so are more likely to succeed in quitting smoking.

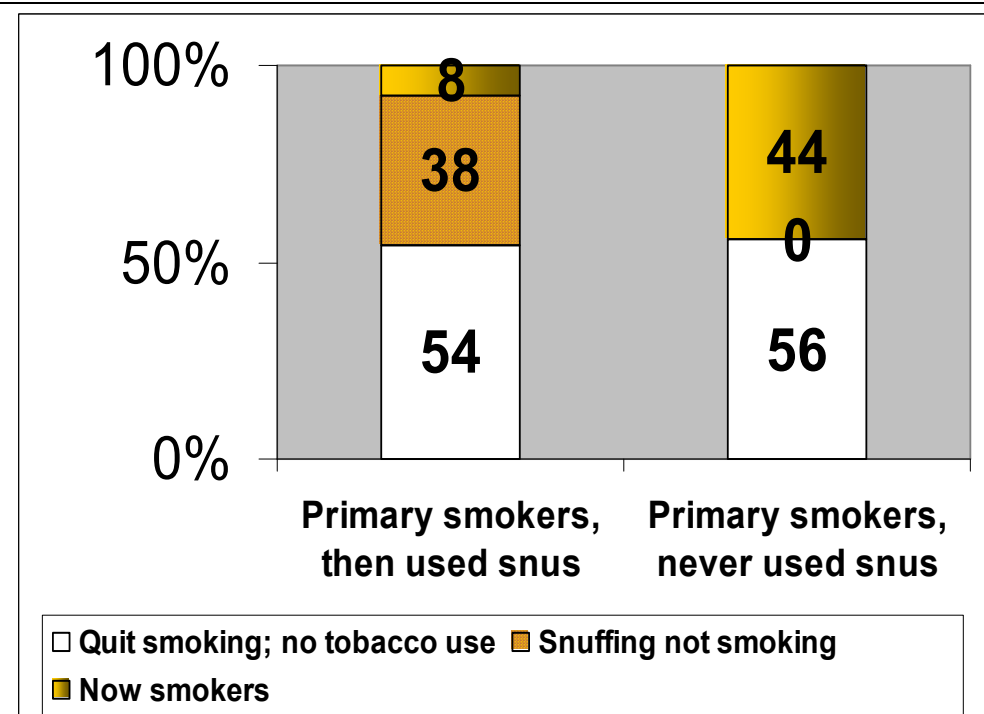
In Sweden, among men, snus is the most popular aid for stopping smoking, and the most likely to be successful (2-4 times more than patch or gum). Over the long term the cumulative effect is equivalent to an extra third of smokers quitting.

United States Kozlowski found that the 42% of young males surveyed who used cigarettes before using snuff, were 2.1 times more likely to have quit smoking than cigarette-only users.¹ This was a cohort study of a natural experiment.

Sweden:

SURVEY DATA TO ASSESS SNUFF AS A LONG TERM AID IN QUITTING SMOKING

Figure 1. In Swedish men, 92% of primary smokers who later used snus quit smoking²



Among 6752 Swedes surveyed in 2001-2, 502 men first used tobacco by smoking it (primary smokers). Of those smokers who did not use snus, 44% still smoked when surveyed, compared with only 8% still smoking among those who used snus.

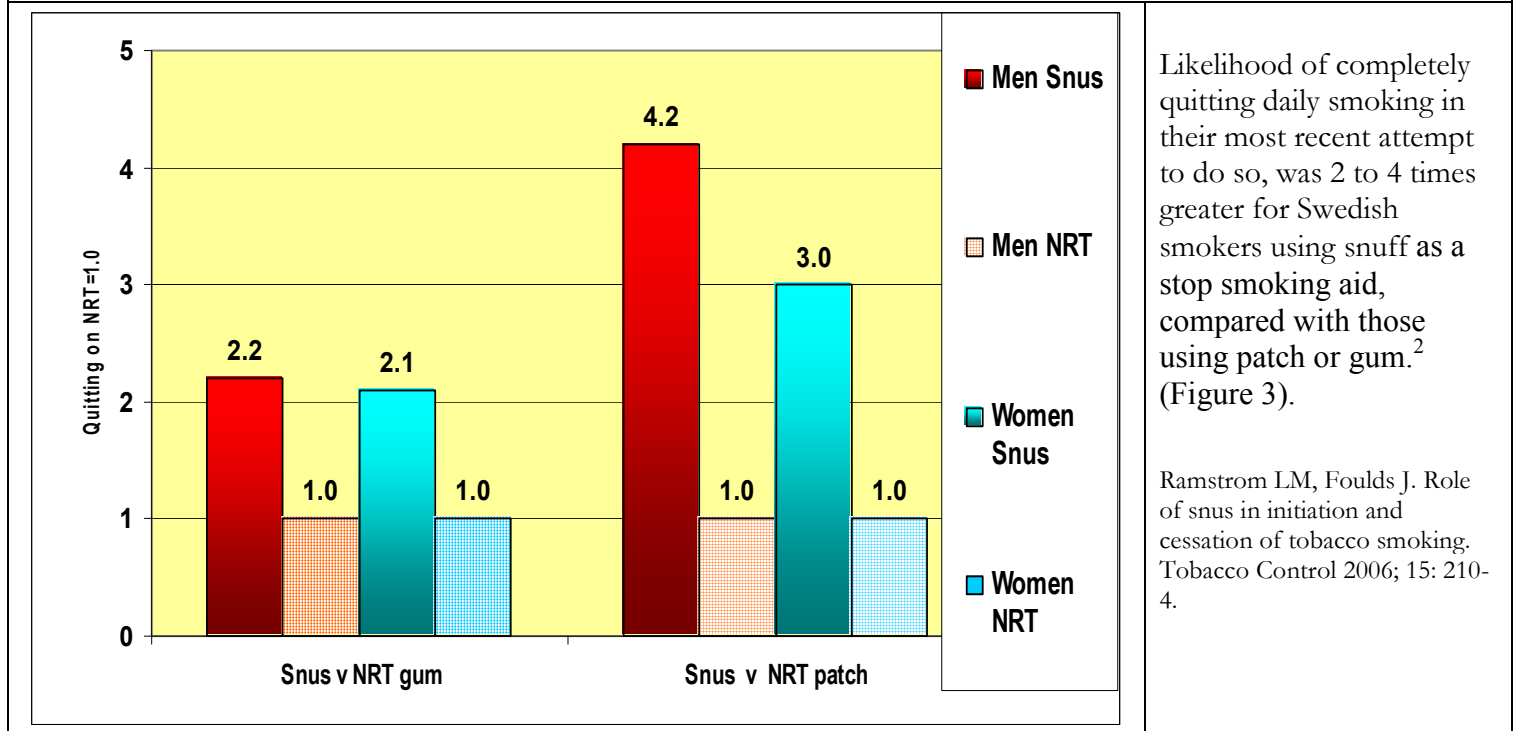
Over time (assuming smokers knew the risks of continued smoking) snus apparently makes it possible for many more smokers to quit.

Regardless of snus use, just over half of smokers had managed to quit smoking and tobacco. Use of snuff resulted in an extra 38% switching from smoking to snuff, so that in total 92% of male primary smokers who used snuff had quit smoking.²

This boost to quitting from snus over and above quitting smoking and tobacco together, suggests that if the nicotine receptors are continually 'placated' with snuff nicotine, the urge to resume smoking for nicotine will tend not be felt or heeded.

SURVEY TO ASSESS THE EFFECT OF SNUFF AS A SHORT-TERM AID TO QUITTING

Fig. 2. Likelihood of quitting smoking completely by using snus in the last quit attempt, compared with NRT gum and patch, where likelihood from using NRT is 1.0. Single aid used.



Snus is a popular aid to quitting in Sweden. At their last quit attempt, 24% of men used snus, and 11% used NRT.² Among women, snus was third in popularity after nicotine gum and patch. Not only is snus popular, it is effective. (Figure 2).

1. Kozlowski LT, O'Connor RJ, Edwards BQ, Flaherty BP. Most smokeless tobacco use is not a causal gateway to cigarettes: using order of product use to evaluate causation in a national US sample. Addiction 2004; 99: 260-2.

2. Ramstrom LM, Foulds J. Role of snus in initiation and cessation of tobacco smoking. Tobacco Control 2006; 15: 210-4.