

# Smoking may cause more stress in teens: Study

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Despite stress being a major factor leading to many teens smoking, new research shows that smoking may actually cause a spike in depression in adolescents.

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TORONTO — Despite [stress](#) being a major factor leading to many teens [smoking](#), new research shows that smoking may actually cause a spike in [depression](#) in adolescents.

The study from the University of Toronto and University of Montreal, which was published in the journal *Addictive Behaviours*, says adolescent smokers who choose to "self-medicate" with cigarettes to relieve stress may create an opposite effect.

"There's a theory to suggest what's happening is that you do feel better after a cigarette, but that's because you're in a state of nicotine withdrawal (before you smoked it)," said Michael Chaiton, the study's lead author, who is also a research associate at the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit.

"When there's something else that's stressful in your life, you're less able to cope with those feelings, so those mood swings become bigger, but are still helped by the cigarettes. Over time, what we see is that it's not actually helpful and that leads to more stress.

"We've known for a long time that higher nicotine dependence is associated with more depression."

Chaiton said between one-third and half of smokers in the test group indicated they smoked to self-medicate from stress and other life pressures.

The study sampled 662 students between grades 7 and 11 — 406 of them female — and included various socio-economic groups, both French and English students and those in urban and rural regions.

The results of the study will contribute to other findings in the Nicotine Dependence in Teens study, a long-term project being conducted by the University of Montreal Hospital Research Centre.

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