About the Editors

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Riccardo Polosa is Director of the Institute for Internal Medicine and Clinical Immunology of the University of Catania (Italy). He is also a Honorary Professor of Medicine at Southampton University (UK). He is the author of more than 200 peer-reviewed articles and books, mainly covering respiratory medicine, clinical immunology and tobacco addiction.

Pasquale Caponnetto

Pasquale Caponnetto is a Researcher and Clinical Psychologist at the Anti-Smoking Center of Catania University, Italy, where he is involved in international clinical research. He is a Specialist in Psychotherapy and is training in Ericksonian psychotherapy at the Milton Erickson Foundation (AZ, USA). He has a PhD in clinical psychology from the Sapienza–Università di Roma (Italy). He is also part of the scientific collaboration for Lega Italiana AntiFumo. One of his main research interests is psychological strategies for smoking cessation; he is currently involved in a pharmaceutical industry-sponsored randomized, controlled trial of varenicline in diabetic smokers (DIASMOKE). He is also involved in the evaluation of electronic cigarettes; they have just completed the first randomized, controlled trial on safety and efficacy of electronic cigarettes (ECLAT study). He is also involved in the evaluation of nicotine pharmacokinetic and cognitive profile of electronic cigarettes (KINECIG/COCECIG study).

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Foreword

Advances in smoking cessation

Riccardo Polosa &
Pasquale Caponnetto

With a burden of an estimated 1.2 billion people, tobacco smoking is a global pandemic that poses a substantial health burden. Despite the global effort to curtail the tobacco epidemic, smoking prevalence is still escalating in developing countries, with eastern Europe leading with a staggering average annual consumption of more than 2500 cigarettes per person. By contrast, in developed countries smoking rates for men have peaked and have begun to decline, but for women they continue to climb. Moreover, smoking prevalence has changed little since the mid-1990s (until which time it declined in English-speaking countries due to the implementation of tobacco control initiatives). Currently, escalation is clearly prevailing over control and the WHO now predicts that some 1.5–1.9 billion people will be smokers in 2025.

With approximately 5.4 million deaths annually, tobacco smoking is the leading noninfectious cause of premature mortality in the world. Death is primarily caused by lung and other cancers, ischemic heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. However, the risk of serious disease has been shown to diminish rapidly after smoking cessation – ‘quitting’ – and permanent abstinence markedly reduces the risk of lung cancer and other cancers, ischemic heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. ‘Offer help to quit tobacco use’ in people addicted to nicotine is one of the six proven policies identified by the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to expand the fight against the tobacco epidemic. In keeping with these recommendations, state governments (the Framework Convention

on Tobacco Control has been endorsed by over 170 countries) are under an obligation to address and treat tobacco dependence in their primary healthcare services.

Current professional approaches to smoking cessation range from simple medical advice to pharmacotherapy and counseling. In general, the success of smoking cessation interventions appear to increase with the intensity of their program content. For example, the combination of pharmacotherapy and counseling is more effective than either alone, probably at least in part because counseling improves medication adherence.

Although a plethora of smoking cessation literature and books already exist, the editors have paid special attention to the structure and content of *Advances in Smoking Cessation* so that only truly ground-breaking yet practical aspects of the topic would be dissected out with the hope of offering the reader a terrific learning experience.

Cigarette smoking is a remarkable addiction and when given the options of smoking or completely giving up tobacco, many smokers will not give it up. It is disconcerting that at the dawn of 21st century after nearly 50 years of intensive research efforts, current smoking cessation methods are still lacking high levels of efficacy, particularly in real-life settings. While there continues to be much debate about the size of the problem, this is known to reflect the chronic relapsing nature of tobacco dependence and more effective approaches are clearly needed to reduce the burden of cigarette smoking. The minimalist idea that nicotine is at the heart of the problem is no longer tenable. While nicotine is important in the maintenance of smoking dependence for many smokers, its role is now being questioned because a chemical molecule *per se* cannot replace the complexity of rituals associated with smoking gestures and behaviors.

The ambition of *Advances in Smoking Cessation* is to meet these specific challenges and to provide a new unconventional foundation that may inspire and advance the stagnant field of smoking cessation. To accomplish this goal, the editors have placed great importance in the dynamics underlying the chronic relapsing nature of tobacco dependence, in the emerging alternative strategies centered on noncombustible products that reduce exposure risk and in the central role of the smoker as a person with their needs, fears and comorbidities. The structure of *Advances in Smoking Cessation* was carefully designed to reflect this philosophy.

We are indebted to those who have agreed to contribute to this publication. By doing so, they have created a highly educational series of articles that resonate with the future directions of smoking cessation management. We are most grateful for the time and effort that they have all dedicated to

this task. Finally, we would like to thank Duc Hong Le, our publisher contact, for all the encouragement he has given us and our contributors in preparing the articles.

Being an electronic book, *Advances in Smoking Cessation* has to be considered work in progress. Therefore, our biggest thanks will go to those who will send advice and comments to enhance *Advances in Smoking Cessation* thus contributing to a better management of those desiring to quit tobacco smoking worldwide.

Financial & competing interests disclosure

R Polosa has received lecture fees from Pfizer and GSK and he has served as a consultant for Pfizer, Global Health Alliance for treatment of tobacco dependence, and Arbi Group Srl, (Milano, Italy), the distributor of Categoria e-Cigarette. The authors have no other relevant affiliations or financial involvement with any organization or entity with a financial interest in or financial conflict with the subject matter or materials discussed in the manuscript apart from those disclosed.

No writing assistance was utilized in the production of this manuscript.