

Joint Press Release of the German Dental Association and the German Cancer Research Center

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## Dentists Help to Stop Smoking

### New report: “Smoking and oral health – The role of dentists in tobacco prevention”

Teeth becoming loose and falling out – this may be caused by daily cigarette consumption, because toxins in tobacco smoke promote immunological processes which contribute to destruction of the jaw bone. Therefore, smokers are far more frequently affected by inflammatory conditions of the periodontal apparatus (periodontal diseases) and have almost twice the risk of loss of teeth compared to non-smokers. This is shown in the new report “Rauchen und Mundgesundheit” (Smoking and oral health) published by the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) jointly with the German Dental Association (Bundeszahnärztekammer). Smoking does not only harm the gums and teeth, it can also cause deadly cancer of the oral cavity. “About 10,000 people in Germany are diagnosed with cancer of the oral cavity and pharynx each year and about 4,500 die from it – mainly men. In 2007, these types of cancer were on rank 7 of cancer death causes in men and rank 16 in women,” says Dr. Martina Pötschke-Langer, prevention expert and head of DKFZ’s Division of Cancer Prevention.

The best prevention against this kind of damage is rigorous smoking cessation. Attempts are most likely to be successful with professional assistance, which can also be provided by dentists. Dentists, in particular, can make a big difference in helping people to stop smoking, because they usually see their patients at very regular intervals. Dr. Dietmar Oesterreich, vice president of the German Dental Association explains: “About 76 percent of adults and about 66 percent of adolescents in Germany go to the dentist at least once a year. Each time, this is an opportunity for the dental team to motivate smokers to stop smoking and, thus, reduce disease risks and contribute to improving their own health.”

Therefore, the German Dental Association encourages all dental professionals to become active in counseling smokers and, thus, promoting their patients’ oral health. The new report provides easily applicable intervention strategies for dentists who are willing to become involved in smoking cessation counseling. Moreover, the publication promotes the mutual understanding among different medical disciplines, which is the basis of an interdisciplinary approach in stop-smoking counseling.

The report (in German) can be viewed on the Internet at [www.tabakkontrolle.de](http://www.tabakkontrolle.de) and [www.bzaek.de](http://www.bzaek.de).

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany and is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers. More than 2,000 staff members, including 850 scientists, are investigating the mechanisms of cancer and are working to identify cancer risk factors. They provide the foundations for developing novel approaches in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer. In addition, the staff of the Cancer Information Service (KID) offers information about the widespread disease of cancer for patients, their families, and the general public. The Center is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (90%) and the State of Baden-Württemberg (10%).

The German Dental Association (Bundeszahnärztekammer, BZÄK), Network of Dental Associations in Germany, is the national professional association of all dentists in Germany – currently more than 83,000. The dental associations of the German states are members of the German Dental Association. The German Dental Association represents the interests of dentistry regarding health, prevention and professional policies with a view

to the common good. Its primary goal is to work towards a liberal, future-minded healthcare system that centers on the patient.

This press release is available at [www.dkfz.de/pressemitteilungen](http://www.dkfz.de/pressemitteilungen) or [www.bzaek.de/presse/presseinformationen.html](http://www.bzaek.de/presse/presseinformationen.html).

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