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MEDIA RELEASE

Asthma and smoking - a dangerous mix

People with asthma continue to smoke at least as commonly as people without asthma, despite the known adverse effects as identified in the recent report from the Australian Centre for Asthma Monitoring.

The Asthma Foundation of WA's Education and Training Manager, Kristina Croxford says that people with asthma need to take heed - cigarette smoke may be doing more harm than you might realise.

"Whilst the harmful effects of both active and passive smoking are well known, people with asthma who smoke have particular problems," says Ms Croxford.

Smoking makes asthma worse; may increase the frequency of attacks; makes asthma control more difficult; increases the chance of permanently damaging the airways; and makes asthma medications less effective.

With the reduction in effectiveness of asthma medications, people with asthma who smoke will find it very difficult to keep their asthma under control. They may experience more inflammation and mucous in the lungs and prolonged symptoms of coughing, wheezing, tightness in the chest and shortness of breath. Difficult to manage asthma due to smoking can lead to greater hospitalisations. This contributes to the \$2.4 billion spent in WA each year on smoking related illness as identified in a report commissioned by the Cancer Council in 2008.

"It is important for all smokers to consider quitting and we would encourage all people with asthma who smoke to access the services available to them through the Asthma Foundation of WA to begin to take steps to improve their own impact on their health," Ms Croxford said.

About the Asthma Foundation

The Asthma Foundation is a community-based not-for-profit organisation that provides free education and information on asthma to members of the community. For further information go to www.asthmawa.org.au or call 1800 645 130.

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