Tobacco Control and Treatment for the Pediatric Clinician: Practice, Policy, and Research Updates

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ABSTRACT: Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, and exposure to tobacco smoke harms children from conception forward. There is no safe level of tobacco exposure. While overall smoking rates have declined, the advent of new products, such as electronic cigarettes, threatens to perpetuate nicotine addiction without clear health benefits. In addition to reviewing traditional and new tobacco products, we discuss the unique role that pediatricians should play in tobacco treatment and control efforts. New policies and technologies can empower pediatric clinicians and pediatric healthcare systems to help parent smokers quit, and new policies outside of the healthcare setting may help prevent smoking initiation as well as improve cessation treatments. Future research is needed to continue to study both the consequences of tobacco use and exposure as well as the best ways to help patients and parents stop tobacco use.

Journal:

Academic Pediatrics
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