

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Although 64% of current smokers express a strong desire to quit, only 1 in 5 who have tried received any assistance. Tobacco quitlines like the Vermont Quit Network have been shown to be effective resources for those who wish to quit smoking, but previous studies have shown that these quitlines have been able to contact only 40% of referred patients, despite 3 attempts.

The National Alliance of Research Associate Programs is collaborating to perform a large scale, multi-center smoking-cessation intervention across the country in 2012. The research objective of this project is to gain insight into the reasons patients who agree to a referral do not or cannot follow up with the Vermont Quit Network. Student Research Associates in the Fletcher Allen Emergency Department are approaching all non-emergent patients with a smoking history and offering referrals to the Vermont Quit Network. Research data is collected via a short questionnaire about subject smoking histories and habits, and by tracking successful referrals. The Vermont Quit Network will attempt to contact participants and offer them tools to help them quit smoking, then report to the investigators whether they were able to contact the participants or not. A randomized selection of participants who agreed to the referral but eventually refused to participate in the Quit Network will be asked to complete a survey about their experience and the reasons they did not follow up after referral. The results of this research will provide smoking cessation services like the Quit Network with improved services to reach more people looking for assistance in smoking cessation. Moreover, participation in this project has the potential to greatly increase referrals to Vermont Quit Network and may ultimately help decrease smoking among Vermonters.