



## The Cost of Secondhand Smoking in Hong Kong

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The smoke from a burning cigarette contains a toxic mix of chemical substances and the IARC has classed secondhand tobacco smoke (SHS) as a Group 1 carcinogen. The harm to adult passive smokers includes lung cancer and respiratory illness, heart disease and stroke as well as more minor acute respiratory symptoms and irritation. Children are even more vulnerable with domestic exposures before and/or after birth resulting in low weight infants, chronic health problems and more frequent hospital admissions for respiratory disease. There is also evidence of damage to lipoproteins in children although much of the longer term harm has not yet been assessed.

For adults in Hong Kong, the workplace is a common site of exposure. Non-smoking catering workers had urine cotinine levels which indicated a 3% increased risk of mortality from heart disease or lung cancer compared with a level of 0.1% for the US occupational health significant risk level. The local costs of passive smoking will be presented in health and in monetary terms.