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Intimate Partner Violence and Maternal Cigarette Smoking Before and During Pregnancy

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In Reply

Thank you for your interest in our article.¹ We appreciate the opportunity to clarify our statement in the abstract about the potential benefit of assessing for intimate partner violence among smokers.

Your suggestion to compare rates of intimate partner violence among women who smoke and those who do not smoke to justify the rationale for intimate partner violence assessment among smokers was of interest to us. We completed the analysis you suggested but did not include it in the article. Our analysis showed that 15.1% of women who smoked during pregnancy reported intimate partner violence and 9.5% of nonsmokers reported intimate partner violence. Although the prevalence is higher, we do not advocate restricting intimate partner violence assessment to women who smoke. We do advocate for routine intimate partner violence assessment among all women (smokers and nonsmokers) no matter how high the prevalence among smokers or how different the rates between smokers and nonsmokers.

Whereas smoking status usually is ascertained prenatally, most women are not assessed for intimate partner violence, and physicians identify many barriers to carrying out intimate partner violence screening.^{2,3} Our statement about additional and targeted intimate partner violence assessment among women who smoke was meant to emphasize the lost opportunity to tailor trauma-informed smoking cessation when universal intimate partner violence assessment is not initially done and to reinforce the American College of Obstetricians and

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Gynecologists' Committee Opinion⁴ to screen for intimate partner violence not just once, but also during each trimester of pregnancy. As reported in our article, smoking is a significant comorbid condition among abused women—6% of women are physically abused around the time pregnancy, and 30% of these women smoke. Knowledge of both intimate partner violence and smoking status will better enable providers to not only help abused women stay safe but also to help prevent the adverse pregnancy outcomes these women experience due to smoking.

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