

P.E.A.R.L.S. Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations



Nicotine receptor partial agonists help people stop smoking

Clinical Question	How effective are nicotine receptor partial agonists in helping people to stop smoking?
Bottom Line	Varenicline increases the odds of quitting smoking approximately three-fold compared with placebo. NNT from 5 to 12 for abstinence at 52 weeks. The number of people stopping smoking with varenicline is significantly higher than with bupropion NNT 9-24 , with a lower risk of serious adverse effects. Cytisine may also increase the chances of quitting, but the evidence at present is inconclusive.
Context	Smoking is the most preventable cause of premature death, accounting for 17% of all deaths in some developing countries
Caveat	The main adverse effect of varenicline is nausea, which is mostly at mild to moderate levels and usually subsides over time and had little effect on discontinuation rates.
Reference	Cahill K et al.. Nicotine receptor partial agonists for smoking cessation. Cochrane Reviews, 2007, Issue 1. This review contains 5 trials and 2451 participants taking varenicline.
Date (Author)	Feb 2007 (Brian R McAvoy)

NNT = numbers needed to treat to benefit one person

NNH = numbers needed to harm one person

Both NNT and NNH are only reported if the studies or pooling of studies is statistically significant

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