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Profiling of Tobacco Use Among Patients Attending a Specialist Dental Clinic.

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Background: Tobacco use data in dental clinics are usually obtained by patient-completed questionnaires, which are known to be unreliable. We hypothesized that tobacco use is under-reported by patients attending a specialty periodontics dental clinic.

Subjects and methods: The smoking status of 108 subjects attending a university-based specialist periodontics clinic was assessed by clinician-administered interview and salivary cotinine measurement.

Results: 10.0% of the detected smokers (salivary cotinine > 14.2 ng ml⁻¹) reported to be non-smokers in the clinician-administered interview, while 23.8% of detected smokers (salivary cotinine > 14.2 ng ml⁻¹) claimed to be non-smokers in the patient-completed questionnaires provided by subjects at the periodontics clinic.

Conclusions: The combination biochemical profiling and clinician-administered tobacco use interview represents an excellent method to improve the detection of an important, periodontally susceptible population – regular smokers who deny smoking.