SMOKING CESSATION FOR
PSYCHIATRIC CLIENTS

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the article, “Smoking Reduction and Cessation: A Hospital-Based Survey of Outpatients’ Attitudes,” by Green and Clarke in the May 2005 issue (Vol. 43, No. 5, pp. 18-25). I have been the coordinator of a smoking cessation program at a hospital-based outpatient mental health clinic since 1999, with modest success. The program is offered to the employees, patients, and community. I work with a large population of people who have the diagnosis of schizophrenia. Although I had known that these individuals do a great deal of smoking, I was surprised at the cost of $20 billion per year, quoted in the article.

I agree that most health care professionals do not encourage people with mental illnesses to quit smoking for fear of placing an extra burden on their already stressful lives, but at what cost? Could it just be an assumption that might be discounted with a little more effort on the part of the provider? Thank you the article and the updated statistics.

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