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JOIN THE ESCAPE PROJECT:

European smoking cessation activities – a project of EFORT FOUNDATION

Large scientific studies are showing that **smokers have a 2 to 5 times higher risk for perioperative complications** compared to nonsmokers. The reason is that smoking increases carbon monoxide levels in the circulation resulting in lower tissue levels of oxygen.

This has several negative impacts. A higher rate of complications, mainly infections, delayed bonehealing up to 7 weeks, delayed woundhealing and pseudarthroses. Several topics are especially covered in the literature: hip and knee endoprotheses, shoulder surgery, foot surgery, lower back pain and fracture healing.

But smokers can reduce their risks markedly! It is not so well known, neither by patients nor by many surgeons, that perioperative smoking cessation with a minimum of 4 to 6 weeks preoperatively and 6 weeks postoperation or post-trauma has a very positive impact on perioperative complications:

- It reduces complications in elective surgery by up to 50%;
- It reduces complications after trauma by approx. 40%;
- It is a very cost-effective tool, allowing savings of approx. €35 million per 100 000 knee and hip arthroplasties;
- It helps around 20% to 30% of patients involved in such a programme to stop smoking permanently following surgery.

Heavy smokers are even allowed to use nicotine replacement products during this cessation period. The reason is that they do not create the same harmful side effects as traditional smoking.

EFORT FOUNDATION has the intention to increase awareness of the importance of perioperative smoking cessation with a project called ESCAPE. The foundation will also work to get donations for this activity.

A way to spread information more rapidly is to make existing knowledge more easily accessible from those countries where prevention is routine procedure. Therefore, we invite experienced institutes and National Societies to share their experience and information material such as brochures, posters and other printed material, descriptions of working routines and web links to such material.

It is the intention of the ESCAPE project to collect this information, to assist by translating it into English and other languages if necessary and to publish it via our homepage.

We would be grateful if you could assist us by raising awareness of the importance of perioperative smoking cessation. Doing so you might simultaneously reduce your complication rate and save your patients from suffering as well as save money for your budget.

Prof. Dr. Karl-Göran Thorngren
Chairman EFORT FOUNDATION

Prof. Dr. Niki Böhler
Chairman ESCAPE project