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Higher incentive amounts do not appear associated with greater quit rates in incentive programmes for smoking cessation

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Background

- Incentive programmes encourage and reward behaviour change
- Example: Etter and Schmid (2016)
 - End of programme: OR 4.02
 - 12 month later: OR 1.60

ORIGINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Effects of Large Financial Incentives for Long-Term Smoking Cessation

A Randomized Trial

Jean-François Etter, PhD, Felicia Schmid, MA



ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND It is not known whether large financial incentives enhance long-term smoking cessation rates outside clinical or workplace settings.

OBJECTIVES The goal of this study was to test whether large financial incentives improved long-term smoking cessation rates in low-income smokers, in a general population setting, without face-to-face or telephone counseling.

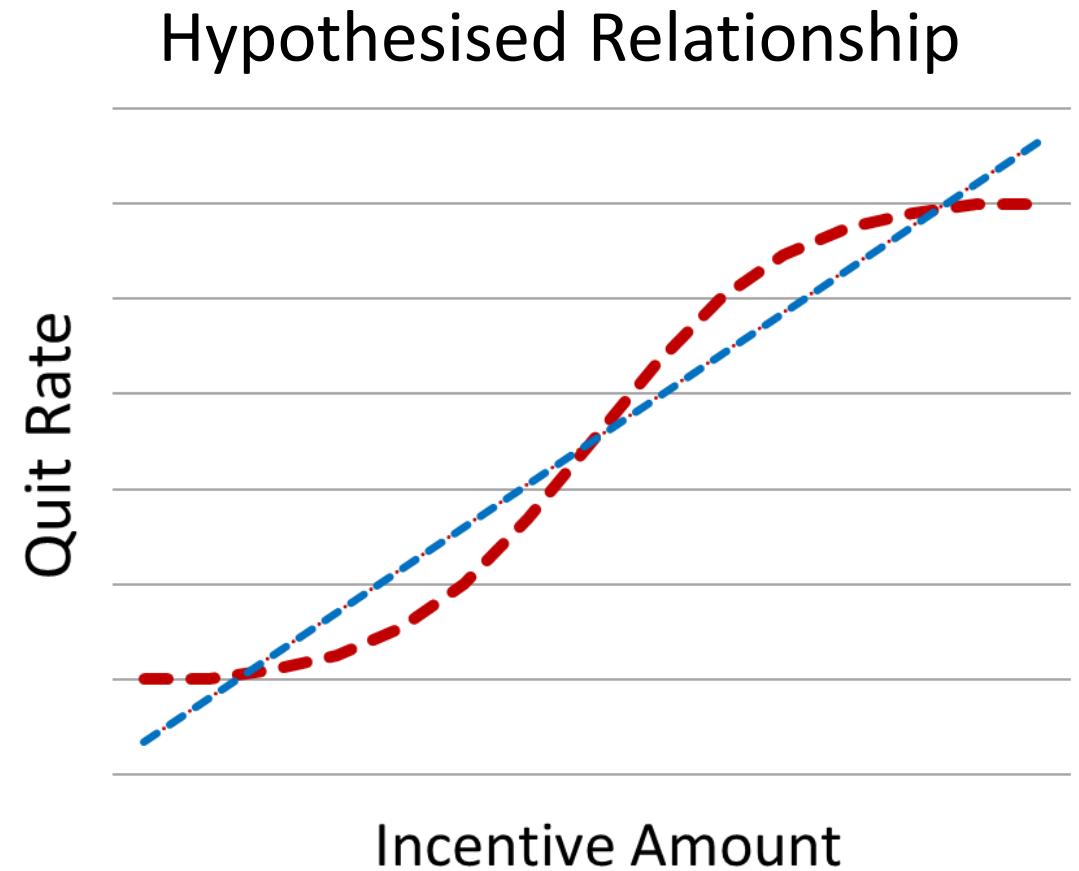
METHODS This was a 2-arm, parallel group, individually randomized controlled trial, with follow-up after 3, 6, and 18 months. Participants were 805 low-income smokers enrolled between 2011 and 2013 from the general population in Geneva, Switzerland. We randomly assigned participants to receive either booklets plus access to a smoking cessation website (control group, n = 404), or the same intervention plus financial incentives (intervention group, n = 401). Incremental financial rewards, to a maximum of U.S. \$1,650, were offered for biochemically verified abstinence at 1, 2, and 3 weeks, and 1, 3, and 6 months. No in-person counseling, telephone counseling, or medications were provided. The primary outcome was continuous abstinence between 6 months (end of incentives) and 18 months (12 months after the incentives ended), verified by expired carbon monoxide and salivary cotinine. We also assessed biochemically verified

Background

- ~ \$2,200 per participant?
- “How much” questions are important:
 - Cost-effectiveness
 - Policy marker/potential providers
- How do we work out how much should offer?
- Aim: investigate whether there is an association between incentive amounts and quit rates

Methods

- Reviewed programmes wherein adults were incentivised to quit smoking
- 26 studies included
- Tested linear and non-linear fits



Results

- No evidence of a linear or non-linear relationship
- But, numerous variations in programme design exist

	Min.	Median	Max.
Total incentive amount (USD)	\$106.19	\$536.67	\$4,027.92
Number of sessions	2	11	52
Programme length (weeks)	3	12	52
Longest follow-up (months)	6	6	24

Summary and Significance

- No support for an association between incentive amount and quit rates
- Numerous variations in previous programme design exist
- Optimal incentive amounts may not be determinable through reviews
- Future directions:
 - Laboratory studies
 - Trials which test and compare the identified amounts

Thank you



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