



Note: The horizontal axis is on log scale
*All studies are case control studies

Figure 7. Risk of Clinical TB Disease for Passive Smoking Exposure Compared with Nonexposure
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These results clearly show that active smoking is associated with a higher risk of TB positive status. The result would be predicted by those who believe smoking decreases resistance to infection or that smokers more often come into contact with carriers of active disease, or, both. For passive smoking, the association is less clear and based on a less reliable study design.

Comment

TB transmission is usually carried by droplets produced in coughing, speaking or sneezing and only occurs when the host is in the active phase of the disease. Three mechanisms could explain the observed increase in risk:

- Smokers are more likely to be exposed to others who smoke and, presumably, cough more often.
- Evidence suggests that smoking and passive smoking are predominant in the lower socioeconomic groups and that these groups are more likely to come into close contact with TB carriers.
- Smoking decreases resistance to infection.

Work groups with close proximity to colleagues are at higher risk of TB; passive smoking could add to that risk. The evidence presented here is not convincing on that point.

It seems unlikely that passive smoking would be blamed for a case of TB.