

Fighting Against Windmills – Tobacco Cessation in a Political Vacuum

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Background

Germany prides itself on aiming for high standards in many aspects of healthcare provision, but has remained at the very end of the EU tobacco control scale since its beginning in 2006. Industry interests and lobbyists interfere with the political hierarchy rather openly and undermine legitimate health promotion requirements. Smoking prevalence remains at a high level and has even increased after the COVID pandemic.

The German Network for Tobacco free Healthcare Services is a non-governmental organization which provides a comprehensive approach to raise awareness, supports tobacco free campuses, emphasizes staff education, shares best practice examples and facilitates peer exchange on a national and international level. Currently comprising of about 120 health institutions with different levels of implementation of eight global standards, learning from each is a key factor to improve quality of treatment for smokers who wish to quit as a bottom up initiative.

This poster shows a selection of good practice examples from a community hospital in a deprived urban area that has been a 'Silver' smoke-free hospital for ten years. This maximum care hospital with more than 1300 beds, approximately 1800 clinical employees treating more than 125.000 patients annually.

<https://www.tobaccofreehealthcare.org/>

Standard 1 Governance and Commitment

The healthcare organisation has clear and strong leadership to systematically implement a tobacco-free policy.

- Signing projects to support national initiatives to promote smoke free living

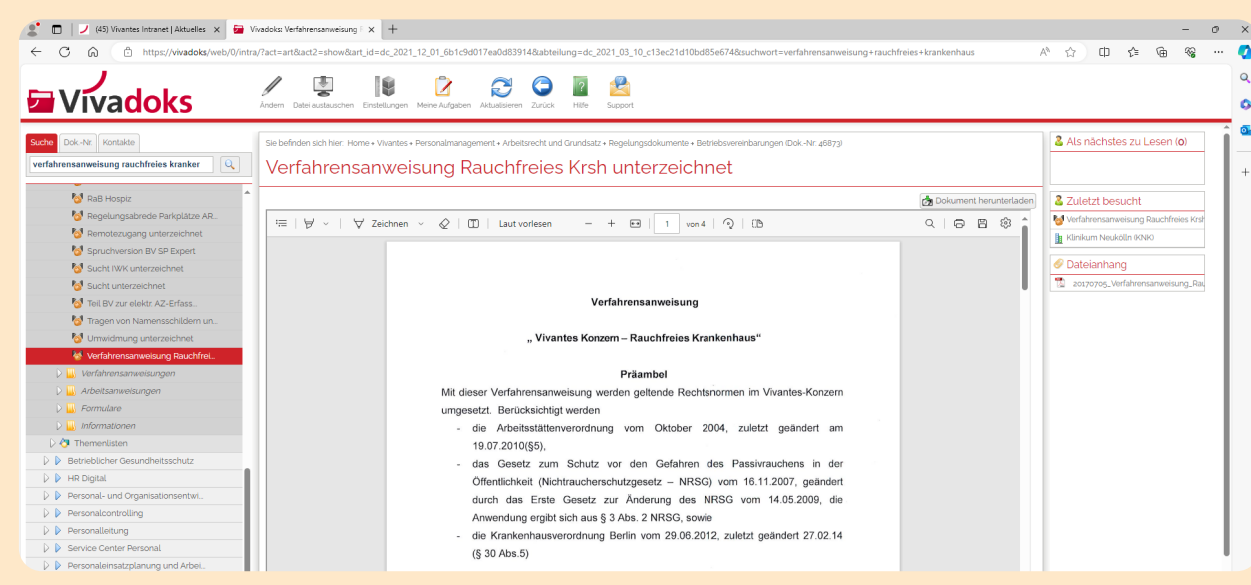
Strategie für ein tabakfreies Deutschland 2040 (dkfz.de)

Factsheet_childrens-rights_EN_revised.pdf (unfairtobacco.org)

Kinder ohne Alkohol und Nikotin (kinder-ohne-alkohol-und-nikotin.de)

Factsheet_womens-rights_EN_5-2021.pdf (unfairtobacco.org)

2023_Index-Einflussnahme-Tabakindustrie-Deutschland.pdf (dkfz.de)



Standard 2 Communication

The healthcare organisation has a comprehensive communication strategy to support awareness and implementation of the tobacco-free policy and tobacco cessation services.

- Internal & external World no Tobacco day campaigns, vlog "how I turned smoke free"
- being smoke free suits my profession



- Cigarette-farewell-machine – donate your unsmoked cigarettes to provide healthy breakfasts for children
- Vitamine instead of nicotine – swap cigarettes for an apple
- Social media campaigns

Standard 3 Training and Education

The healthcare organisation ensures appropriate education and training for clinical and non-clinical staff.

- Digital learning module – how to treat tobacco dependency following guidelines; advantages of a smoke free hospital



Deniz Cerci, Karin Vitzthum: Smoke-free in Psychiatry - A Qualitative Analysis of Staff Perspectives. Psychiatr Prax. 2024 Apr;51(3):157-162.

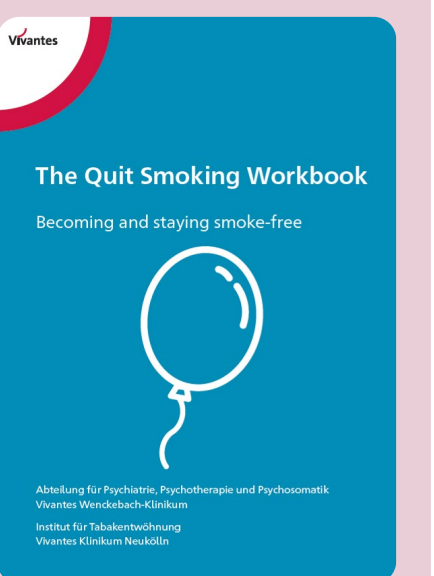
Karin Vitzthum, Deniz Cerci: A Qualitative Investigation of Staff Feedback on an Online Learning Module on Smoking Cessation in a German Healthcare Company. Healthcare (Basel). 2023 Jun 16;11(12):1774.

Vitzthum K, Batra A, Pankow W, Raspe M, Rupp A, Andreas S. Tobacco Cessation - The Underused Potential in Clinical Routine. Pneumologie. 2022 Feb;76(2):126-138.

Standard 4 Identification, Diagnosis and Tobacco Cessation Support

The healthcare organisation identifies all tobacco users and provides appropriate care in line with international best practice and national standards.

- Smoking status is documented in electronic patients' file, patients may receive counselling and nicotine replacement
- Quit-Smoking workbook English, German, Turkish **Selbsthilfe beim Rauchstopp | Vivantes**
- Incentives for stopping in pregnancy



Karin Vitzthum, Noemie Marly, Stephan Föhse, Monica Salameo y Mur, Stefanie Mache and Wulf Pankow: Quasi-stationäre Tabakentwöhnung für drei COPD Patienten mit intellektuellen Einschränkungen 24, 2013

Sabina Ulbricht, Karin Vitzthum: Failed Incentives? Tobacco cessation during pregnancy in Germany. Tob. Prev. Cessation 2023;9(Supplement):A55

Vitzthum K, Drazetic A, Markstein A, Rohde M, Pankow W, Mache S. Evaluation of long-term quitters: who stays smoke free forever? Wien Med Wochenschr. 2021 Oct;171(13-14):330-334.

K Vitzthum, L Thielke, A Deter, T Riemer, S Eggeling, W Pankow, S Mache: Smoking Lung Cancer Patients and Tobacco Cessation - Is the Current Treatment in Germany Sufficient? Pneumologie. 2015 Nov;69(11): 667-72.

Standard 5 Tobacco Free Environment

The healthcare organisation has strategies in place to achieve a tobacco-free campus.

- Teaser in turkish in front of the children's wards
- Restricted smoking areas (signs on park benches, beach flags, ..)



Standard 6 Healthy Workplace

The healthcare organisation has human resource management policies and support systems that protect and promote the health of all who work in the organisation.

- Welcome day for new colleagues, Stay healthy and fit during winter, viva vital, free of cost nicotine replacement on duty
- Smoke free on tour **Kampagne „rauchfrei unterwegs – du und dein Kind“ geht in die nächste Runde: rauchfrei-info.de**



Standard 7 Community Engagement

The healthcare organisation contributes to and promotes tobacco control/prevention in the local community according to the WHO FCTC and and/or national public health strategy.

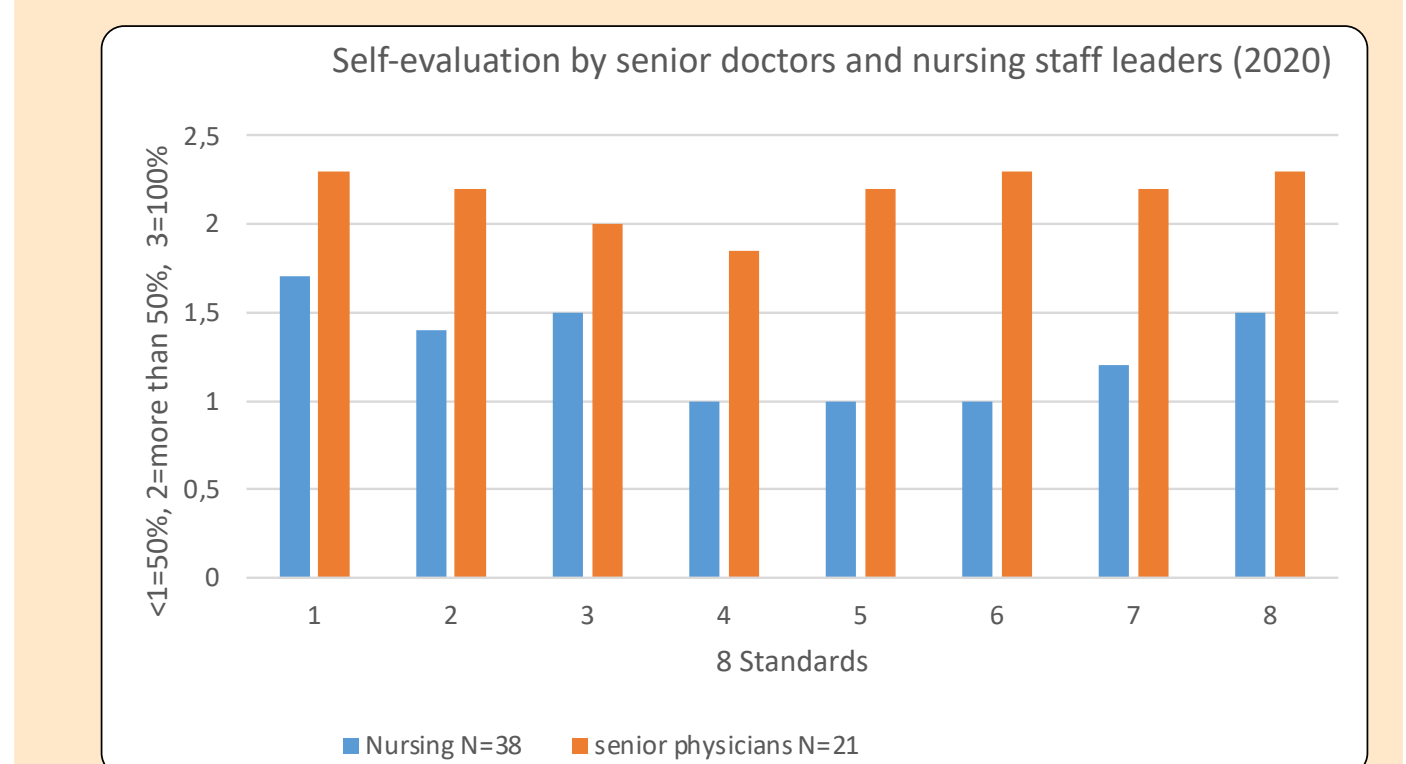
- Engagement in ngo & professional initiatives, giving talks & workshops to different target groups, exhibition unfairtobacco



Standard 8 Monitoring and Evaluation

The healthcare organisation monitors and evaluates the implementation of all the ENSH-Global standards at regular intervals

- Staff's smoking status
- honours given by public and political representatives



Vitzthum K, Koch F, Gronenberg DA, Kusma B, Mache S, Marx P, Hartmann T, Pankow W. Smoking behaviour and attitudes among German nursing students. Nurse Educ Pract. 2013 Sep;13(5):407-12.

K Vitzthum, F Koch, S Kolbmehl-Zorn, L-M Goldhahn, B Kusma, S Mache, D A Gronenberg, W Pankow: Health promotion within health care - analysis of employees' smoking habits, consequences for patient care and resources for future smoking cessation initiatives. Gesundheitswesen. 2013 Jan;75(1):35-42.

Future challenges

Despite bottom up activities, top down regulations would speed up efforts to increase protection of secondhand smoke and quitting trials

Cannabis legalization in Germany may have a negative impact on future initiatives

Prevention and health promoting activities are not reimbursed attractively in German healthcare system