New York wants Chinese men to quit smoking

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Nearly a quarter of Asian men smoke cigarettes and lung cancer among Chinese men in New York City has increased by 70 percent over the past 15 years, according to the city's health department.  
Targeting Chinese men in particular, the department launched a public service campaign earlier this month encouraging them to quit the habit.  
The city has started running public service ads in Cantonese and Mandarin on Chinese-language television and in newspapers.  
Chinese smokers can get free quit-smoking medication and confidential counseling from the Asian Smokers' Quitline - a nationwide service funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.  
"We have made considerable progress in driving down the rates of smoking among adults, but Chinese men still have disproportionately high rates of smoking," said Dr. Mary T. Bassett, the city's health commissioner. "We hope this campaign motivates Chinese men to quit smoking - it is the most important thing they can do to improve their health."  
"Asian Americans represent over 10 percent of New York City's population, but up until recently, data on Asian health disparities have been scarce," Assemblywoman Yuh-Line Niou, whose district includes Manhattan's Chinatown, told China Daily.  
"And lung cancer is one of the leading causes of death among Chinese New Yorkers. It's not enough to just have the numbers, it is critical that we take action to help educate Chinese New Yorkers on the dangers of smoking," she said.  
A 2015 study published in the Lancet found that Chinese men smoke a third of all the cigarettes in the world, and by the year 2050, 3 million of them will be dying each year of smoking-related causes.  
"One of the reasons why Chinese immigrant men have higher rates of smoking than their US-born counterparts is because there are so many people smoking in China," said Dr. Warren Chin, executive director of the Chinese American Medical Society. "Studies show that more than a third of the world's smokers are Chinese."  
"Cancer is the No. 1 cause of death among Chinese in New York City and lung cancer is the No. 1 cause of death for Chinese," he added. "So more people should quit."  
Chin's non-profit, charitable, educational and scientific organization has proposed a North American Chinatown Smoke Free Day in September over the past two years to help Chinese men quit smoking.  
"The harmful effects of cigarette smoking on the individual and collective health of New Yorkers have been clear for decades, which prompted our city years ago to launch innovative efforts at reducing our smoking rate," said Councilwoman Carlina Rivera in a statement.  
"However, we must go the extra mile and target specific populations where these campaigns have come up short. Chinese men continue to use tobacco at higher rates than other groups and have experienced a significant increase in lung cancer deaths.  
"A culturally competent, smoking-cessation campaign specific to these individuals may help increase success in curbing those troubling statistics," she concluded.

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