

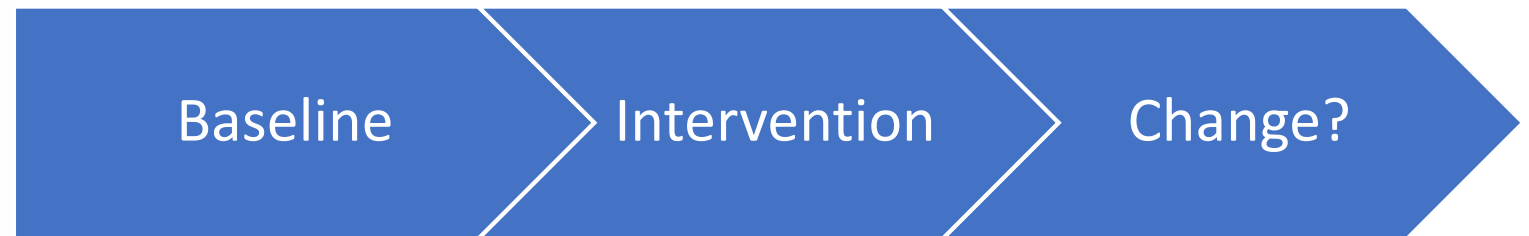
NICOTINE FREE SPACES FOR HEALTHIER CITIES.

Prof. Patrizia Steca, PhD, University of Milan-Bicocca
Evaluating the “Agenti 00Sigarette – Missione LILT”



WHY TESTING MATTERS??

- Many programs remain not evaluated
- Very few programs adopt an appropriate scientific evaluation
- Little is known about what remains and what matters **after years** and across the different life stages



Memories?



Attitudes?



Social
interactions?



Knowledge?



Emotional
representations?

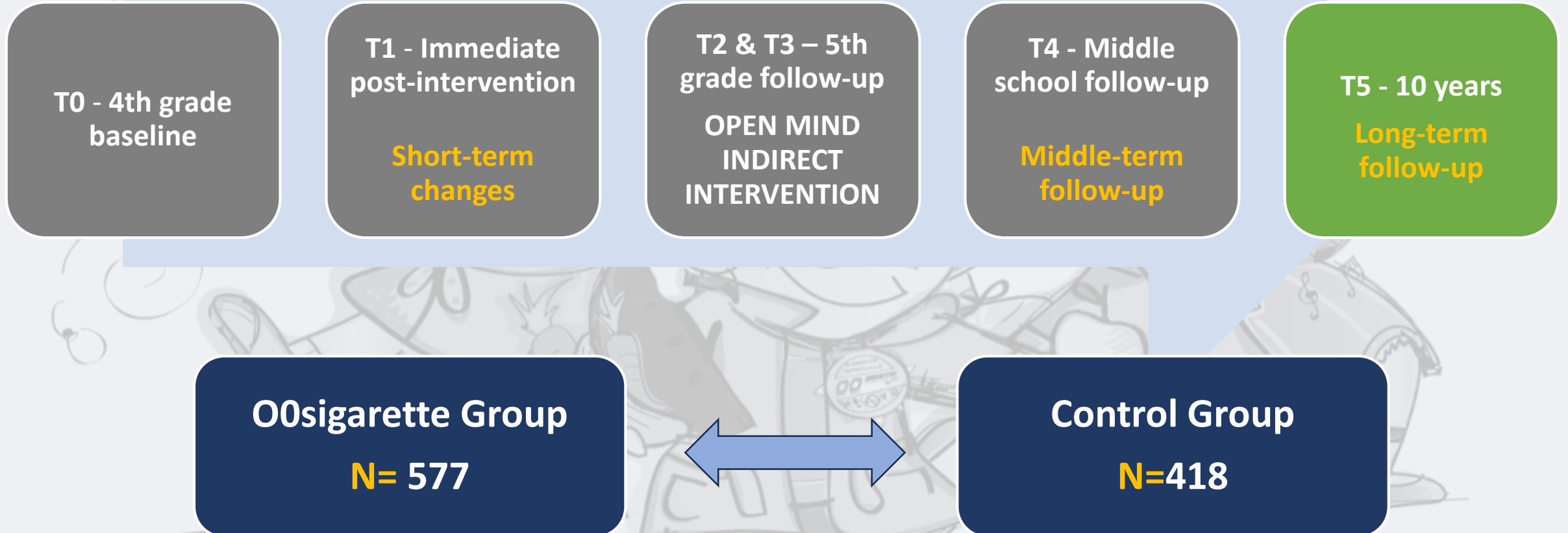


Behaviours?

The Agenti 00 Sigarette – Missione LILT Evaluation Study



STUDY DESIGN



MEASURES

**SMOKE
EXPERIENCE**
(Indirect, Direct)

**SMOKE
KNOWLEDGE**

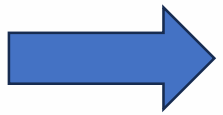
**COGNITIVE
REPRESENTATION**
(FREE WORDS)

ATTITUDES

**EMOTIONS
ASSOCIATED TO
SMOKING**

MAIN RESULTS





The intervention produced measurable cognitive and attitudinal effects during childhood and early adolescence

PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE



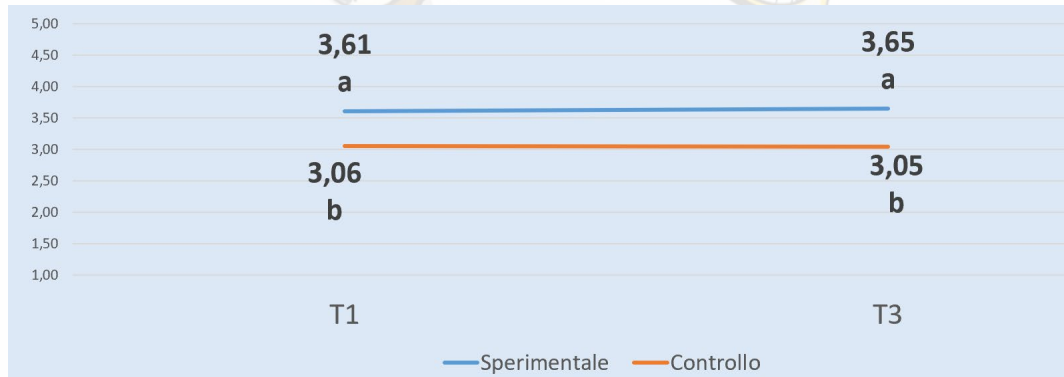
NEGATIVE ATTITUDE



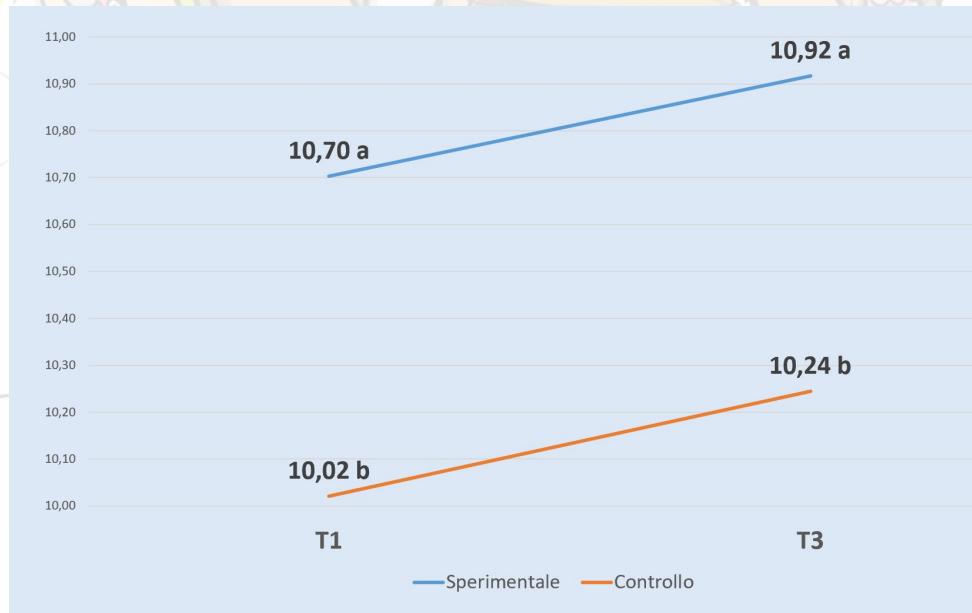
ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE



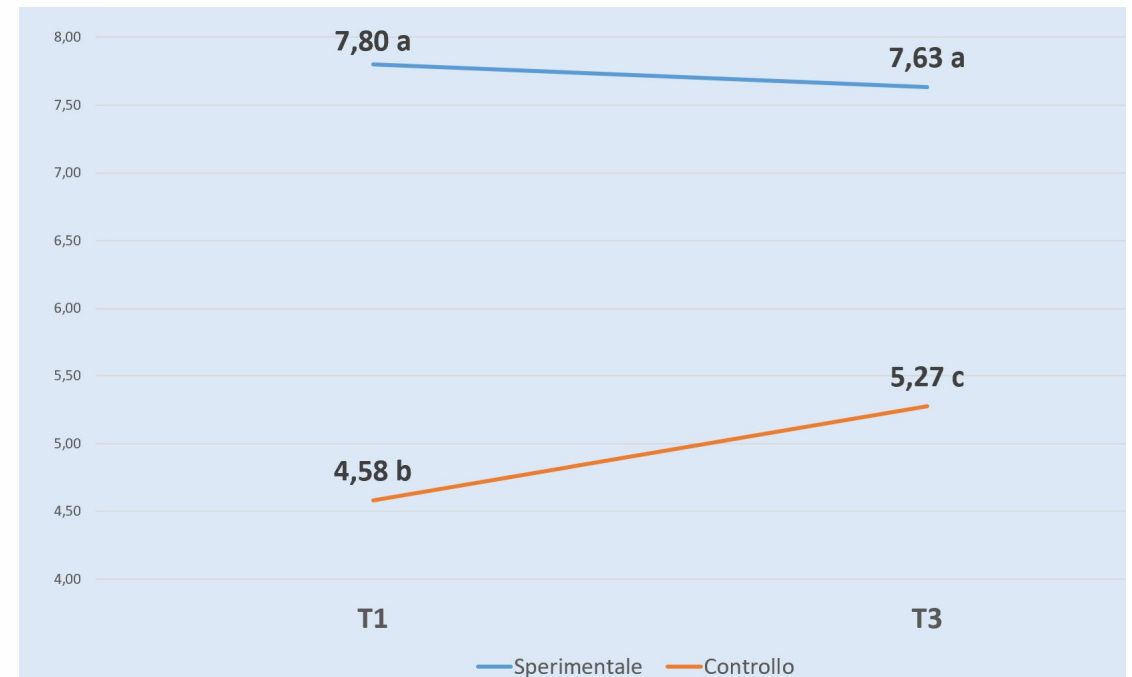
PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE



NEGATIVE ATTITUDE



EFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE



➔ Children exposed to the intervention showed more accurate and health-oriented representations of smoking

Before intervention

adults
curiosity
smoke
cool
growing up
fun
friends cigarettes

After intervention

lungs
health
cancer
harm
damage
dependence
pollution disease
addiction

The 10-year follow-up study: Quantitative Phase

Mixed-method approach integrating behavioural outcomes and subjective experiences

Online survey

- 227 valid participants
- Mean age $\approx$ 18–20 years old
- Experimental vs Control groups

Psychological dimensions

- Knowledge
- Cognitive representations
- Attitudes
- Self-efficacy
- Associated emotions

Prevention & intervention

- Memories of the intervention
- Intervention evaluation
- Interest in prevention

Lifestyle habits

- Physical activity
- Nutrition
- Alcohol consumption

Smoking related behaviors:

- Smoking habits
- Nicotine dependence
- Exposure

The 10-year follow-up study: Qualitative Phase

Mixed-method approach integrating behavioural outcomes and subjective experiences

Semi- structured interviews

- 12 participants
- 2x2 design:
 - 3 Non-Smokers – Control group
 - 3 Non-Smokers – Experimental group
 - 3 Smokers – Control group
 - 3 Smokers – Experimental group

→ Analyzed using the Braun and Clarke's
Thematic Analysis approach

Interview focus:

Spontaneous
cognitive
associations

Emotional
representations

First smoking
memories

Social meanings
of smoking

Smoker
stereotypes

Memories of
the
intervention

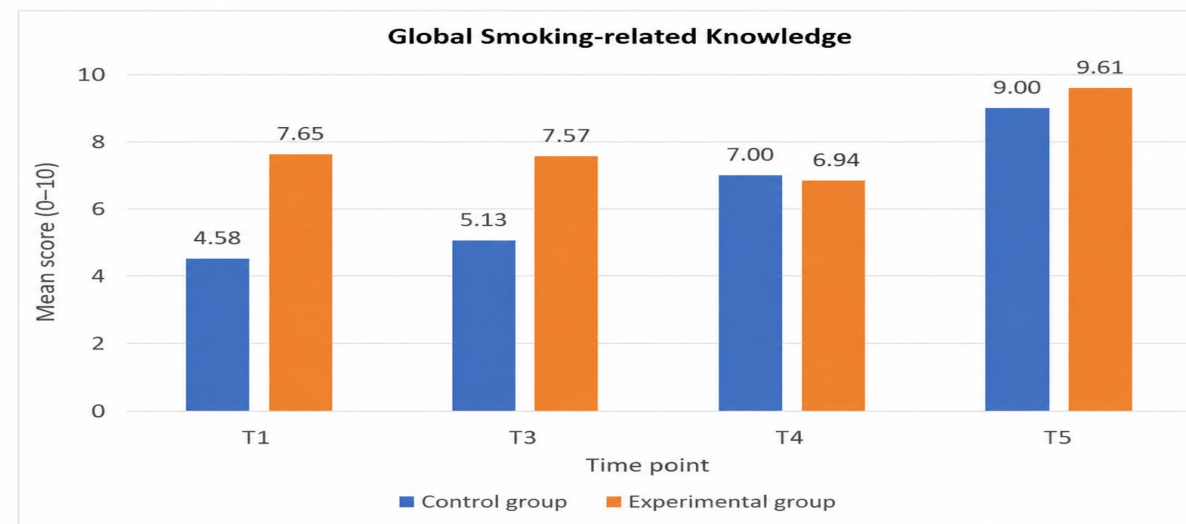
Perceived long-
term influence

Results: Long-term cognitive traces of the intervention

Main Findings:

- Smoking-related knowledge increased over time in both groups
- The experimental group showed significantly higher global knowledge at a 10 years follow-up
- Participants still recalled specific images, concepts, and symbols of the intervention

→ **The intervention appeared to leave persistent cognitive and symbolic traces over time**



I remember the image of the lungs of a smoker

Me and some friends still talk about Tina Nicotina ahah!

The awareness of smoking harms comes from that intervention

I remember learning for the first time about the danger of smoking

Results: Knowing the risk does not always prevent smoking

Main Findings:

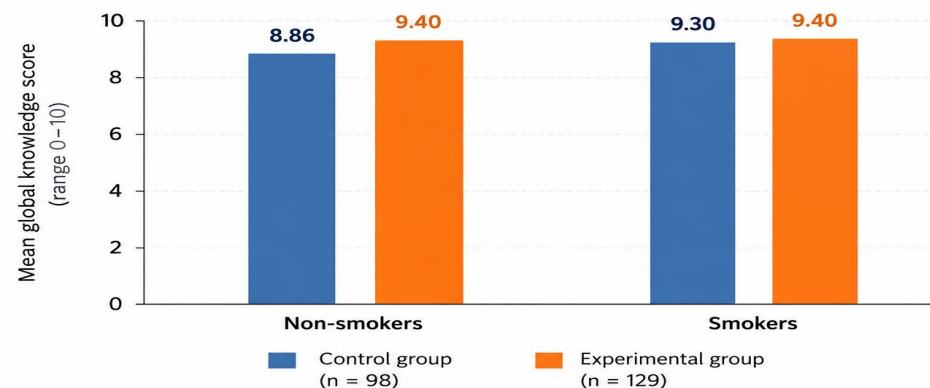
Many participants who smoked demonstrated high awareness of smoking-related harms, suggesting a complex separation between knowledge and behavior.

- High levels of smoking-related knowledge were observed even among participants who smoked
- Smokers frequently described smoking as harmful, addictive, and damaging
- Several participants expressed intentions to quit despite continuing to smoke
- Qualitative findings suggested a dissociation between cognitive awareness and actual behavior



Global knowledge scores

Comparison between smokers and non-smokers by study group



Scores range from 0 (no correct answers) to 10 (all correct answers).

Results: Smoking remains deeply socially embedded

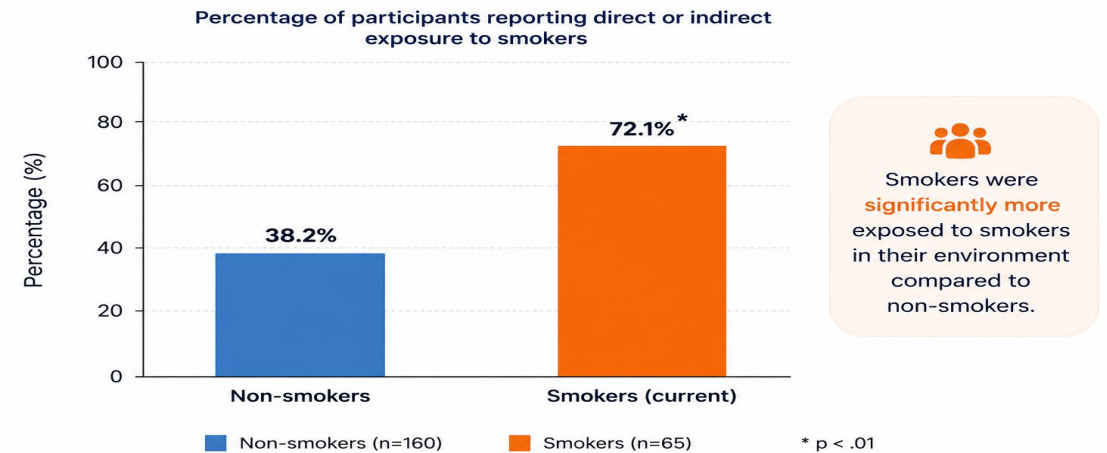
Main Findings:

Even with high levels of awareness and smoking-related knowledge, smoking behavior appeared strongly influenced by social context, peer exposure, and relational dynamics rather than by lack of awareness alone.

- Smokers reported significantly greater exposure to smokers in their everyday environment
- Smoking was frequently associated with peer interaction, social belonging, and shared moments
- Participants often described smoking initiation and maintenance as socially situated behaviours
- Qualitative findings suggested that smoking may function as a relational and contextual practice beyond simple risk unawareness

Exposure to Smokers in the Social Environment

10-Year Follow-Up (Age 18–20)



I started smoking mostly to meet people and to feel part of a group

All my classmates smoked

I probably would have never started smoking alone

We smoked together to chat

When I used to smoke it was mainly in social situations

Results: Smoking as emotional regulation

Main Findings:

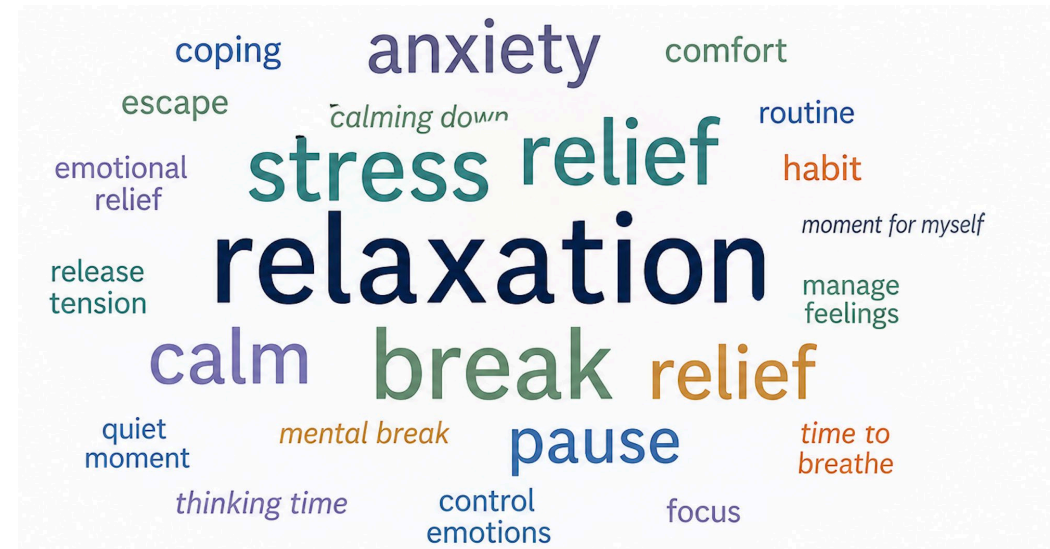
Smoking was often described as a way to regulate emotions, cope with stress, or create moments of pause and relief

- Smoking was frequently associated with relaxation, relief, and emotional regulation
- Participants described smoking as a coping strategy or a way to manage stress and anxiety
- Emotional and ritual aspects of smoking emerged across both experimental and control groups
- Smoking behavior appeared connected not only to social belonging, but also to everyday emotional management

A cigarette helps me to relax and detach from a stressful situation.

I always smoke when I feel anxious.

It gives me a moment to pause.



Results: What did we learn after 10 years?

Main reflections:

The intervention appeared to leave long-term cognitive traces, while smoking behavior remained strongly shaped by social and emotional contexts

Participants retained smoking-related knowledge and memories of the intervention over time

Awareness alone did not fully prevent smoking initiation or maintenance

Smoking behavior emerged as deeply embedded in peer relationships and emotional regulation

Prevention may benefit from moving beyond information-based approaches toward more relational and context-sensitive strategies

Implications for future prevention

Some intervention elements appeared to leave **long-term cognitive traces**, suggesting that prevention may benefit from **combining information, emotional engagement, and social-contextual strategies**.

Future prevention programs may benefit from:

Reinforcing memorable and emotionally engaging intervention elements over time

Addressing peer dynamics and social exposure more explicitly

Integrating emotional regulation and coping strategies into prevention activities

Moving beyond information-only approaches toward more relational and context-sensitive interventions

Maintaining prevention efforts longitudinally rather than through one-time interventions

AGENTE SPECIALE
00 SIGARETTE
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Thank you for your attention!

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