The Impact of Declining Smoking on Radon Related Lung Cancer in the U.S.

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4:10-6PM, in Dow 1005

We examined the effect of current patterns of smoking rates on future radon-related lung cancer by combining the model developed by the National Academy of Science's Committee on Health Risks of Exposure to Radon (the BEIR VI committee) for radon risk assessment with a forecasting model of US adult smoking prevalence to estimate proportional decline in radon-related deaths during the present century with and without mitigation of high-radon houses. Our results show that, by 2025, the reduction in radon mortality from smoking reduction (15 percentage points) will surpass the maximum expected reduction from remediation (12 percentage points). We conclude that although still a genuine source of public health concern, radon induced lung cancer is likely to decline substantially, driven by reductions in smoking rates. Smoking decline will reduce radon deaths more that remediation of high-radon houses, a fact that policymakers should consider as they contemplate the future of cancer control.

Dr. David Mendez is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Management and Policy at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. His research is in the areas of smoking control, product and service quality on demand, and policies regarding residential radon. Professor Mendez is the director of the Executive Master's program in Health Management and Policy at the School of Public Health.

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