Contemplating to quit current smoking status: differences in behavioural and psychosocial patterns in a population-based cohort of current smokers.

BACKGROUND: Smokers actively considering to quit smoking were compared with hard-core smokers completely unwilling to change smoking habits with respect to psychosocial variables. METHODS: A total of 3,229 current regular smokers aged 25-74 years were drawn from three population-based MONICA/KORA Augsburg surveys conducted between 1984 and 1995. Among them, 592 (8.4%) subjects were defined as active contemplators (AC) and 776 (22.6%) as immotives (IM). Multivariate logistic regression analysis stratified by sex was used to identify active contemplators. RESULTS: No differences between ACs and IMs were observed for sex and age. Active contemplating in females was strongly mediated by impaired self-rated health [Odds ratio (OR) 2.29; 95% CI 1.42-3.69] and somatic complaints (OR 2.10; 95% CI 1.29-3.48). For men, depression (OR 2.49; 95% CI 1.64-3.79) and not living alone (OR 2.20, 95% CI 1.51-3.20) promoted being AC. Long-term survival was impaired for IM compared to AC. The odds ratio for smoking cessation of ACs compared to IMs was 1.77 (95% CI 1.25-2.50).

CONCLUSIONS: Sex-specific differences in factors associated with the intention to quit smoking were observed and may lead to sex-specific targets in prevention strategy. IMs may be victims of a concealed healthy
smoker effect triggered by the absence of disabling body or affective symptoms.