

PRESS RELEASE

Florida State University Researchers Helping Smokers Kick Butts in 2009

Mary Gerend  
(850) 645-1542  
[mary.gerend@med.fsu.edu](mailto:mary.gerend@med.fsu.edu)

By Jill Elish

December 1, 2008

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.-- Only 1 percent of smokers who try to quit are smoke-free one year later, but those resolving to kick the habit in 2009 may be able to improve their odds by participating in an intensive treatment program developed by Florida State University researchers. Funded by a \$375,000, three-year grant from the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program, College of Medicine Assistant Professor Mary Gerend and Psychology Professor Brad Schmidt have developed a unique 16-week program that involves education, group sessions with a therapist and nicotine replacement therapy, also known as "the patch." About 27 people have completed the program since it was launched about a year ago, according to Schmidt. "Our preliminary data suggest that between 80 and 100 percent of participants are smoke-free at the initial three-month follow-up," Schmidt said. "We know that this will drop over time, but these are very encouraging figures in light of typical success rates." Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disability in North America, but overcoming nicotine addiction is very difficult without a multifaceted strategy such as the one the Florida State program employs, according to Gerend. "The participants especially seem to enjoy the support they receive from the therapists and other smokers in the program, and they appreciate the opportunity to acquire and practice techniques for quitting in a supportive environment," she said. Daily smokers between the ages of 18 and 65 who are in good health are eligible to participate. Participants are expected to attend screening appointments, weekly group sessions and follow-up appointments. In return, they will receive free nicotine patches and can earn up to \$120 for taking part in the assessments. For more information, call the Anxiety and Behavioral Health Clinic at (850) 645-1766 or visit <http://www.anxietyclinic.fsu.edu/research.htm>.