The main dangers of smoking decrease when smokers quit, even in those who have smoked for 30 or more years. Smokers move through stages in relation to quitting; of pre-contemplation, contemplation, readiness, then action, followed by maintenance or relapse. Many move through this cycle several times before they finally quit, while others report they found it easier to quit than they expected. These stages are influenced by increased costs from tax increases or reduction of smuggling, illness in the smoker, family or friends dying from tobacco, the media, health professions, bans on promotion, creation of smoke-free areas and, while most smokers still quit on their own, availability of support and treatment. There are now techniques to assist those who want to quit smoking, although these are not available in all parts of the world:

- Social support, clinics, quitlines, internet sites, skills training, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and other pharmaceutical treatments.

If interventions only focus on prevention of initiation, and do not address cessation, then 160 million additional smokers will die before 2050 (see below).