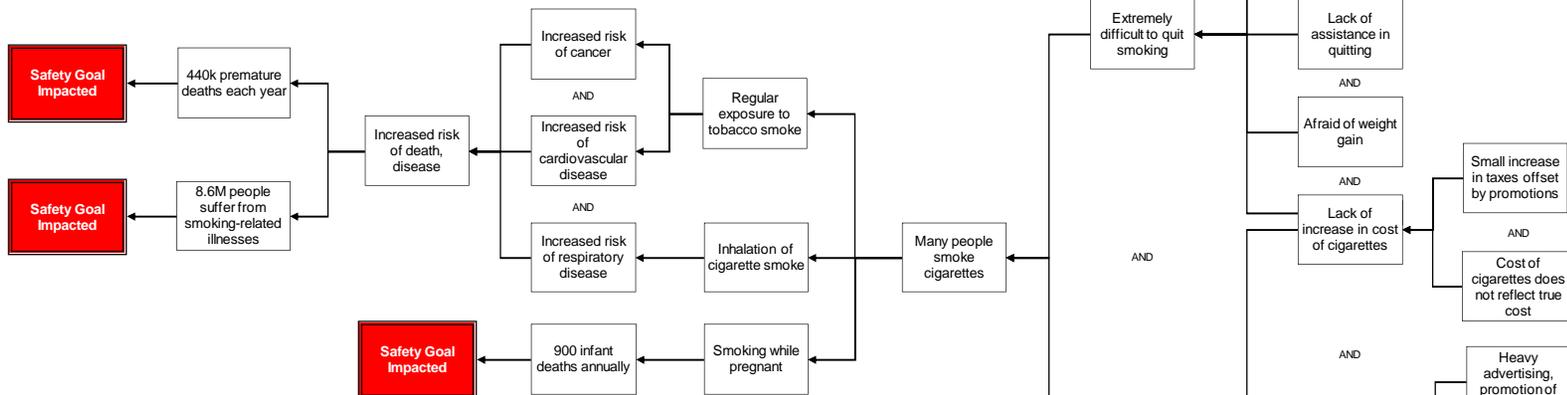


Smoking - Effects and Causes

Currently, more than 43 million Americans smoke. Why does this happen, and what effect does it have? We will do a very simplistic root cause analysis. A thorough root cause analysis built as a Cause Map can capture all of the causes in a simple, intuitive format that fits on one page.



Smoking leads to an estimated 440,000 premature deaths each year. This includes deaths caused by smoking and by exposure to secondhand smoke. Additionally, 8.6 million people suffer from smoking-related illnesses. And, 900 infant deaths are caused annually from smoking during pregnancy. These are all impacts to the safety goal. The deaths and diseases are caused because smoking raises the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory disease. The first two are caused by exposure to tobacco smoke (including secondhand smoke) and the third is caused by inhalation of smoke. Either way, the cause is that many people smoke cigarettes.

Why do people smoke? Well, it's because they start smoking and because it is extremely difficult to quit. There are many reasons why it is difficult to quit. Some of these reasons are: cigarettes are extremely addictive, severe withdrawal symptoms cause relapses, smokers have a lack of assistance in quitting, they are afraid of weight gain, and there is a lack of increase in the cost of cigarettes. This last one sounds odd, but studies have shown that an increase in the cost of cigarettes decreases the number of smokers. However, the cost of cigarettes does not reflect the true cost of cigarettes (based on health costs and productivity losses), and the small increase in taxes (which has not kept up with inflation) is offset by cigarette company promotions.

People start smoking because of the positive imagery of smoking - the heavy advertising and promotion of cigarettes, smoking in popular culture (mainly movies), and the lack of counter-advertising by federal organizations and anti-smoking campaigns. Additionally, most smokers (90%) start as children (before the age of 18) because cigarettes entice children, there is a lack of counseling against their use, teens may suffer from peer pressure encouraging, and children are more susceptible to addiction than adults.

Smoking is an extremely complicated issue. This cause map is very simple. However, more detailed versions are available. This cause map has 26 boxes; the detailed version has more than 160.

Cause Map Detail Level



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