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Current smoking is not associated with COVID-19

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Despite the main complications of SARS-CoV-2 infection regard lung involvement, the prevalence of current smoking in COVID-19 patients is very low, thus questioning the role of coexisting active smoking as a risk factor for COVID-19 pneumonia <https://bit.ly/3eUnl1R>

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To the Editor:

We have read with interest the paper by LEUNG *et al.* [1] recently published in the *European Respiratory Journal*, reporting a higher expression of the protein angiotensin-converting enzyme II (ACE-2) in the small airway epithelia of smokers and COPD patients with putatively important implications for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) patients, since ACE-2 has been shown to be the receptor utilised by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) to enter the host cell [2]. Furthermore, the authors reported that current smokers showed a higher expression of ACE-2 gene expression than non-smokers, concluding that the increased ACE-2 expression in smokers might predispose to increased risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection [1].