Helping people to give up smoking can be easy
To Paolo Mezzelani,

who played an important role in my life and in medicine. Without him I would not have even thought about working on addictions; without his advice I would have become a radiologist.
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Preface

I often ask smokers who are facing the process of quitting smoking what the main obstacle is, the situation that—according to them—holds the greatest risks to make them miss their target. Unequivocally the answer is: the fear of not succeeding. Later, much later, comes the problem of the withdrawal syndrome, the fear of gaining weight, and other "phantoms." The situation is no different for health professionals, especially doctors. They too often stop because of their fear of failure, or get discouraged, thinking they might not have the skills to help people quit smoking. These two difficulties are also frequently reported as "lack of time." The result, unfortunately, is that the "leading cause of preventable death in the developed countries" (according to the World Health Organization [WHO]) is often left untreated. At best, the result is a referral to the closest Tobacco Treatment Center, or the paternalistic prescription: "You must stop smoking." In fact, the treatment of smoking is within the reach of health professionals, if they have a basic knowledge about drugs of proven efficacy, the correct mode of communication with the patient, and some skill of motivational interviewing. The merit of this work by Fabio Lugoboni is to make everything easily accessible and clear. Since the resources of the Health Service are increasingly limited and the tasks assigned to the GP (general practitioner) are increasingly growing, it is crucial to achieve results in outpatient settings. Treating a person with dependence on tobacco is one of the most beneficial actions in terms of cost/benefit, reduced relapse, more long-lasting health, and convenience (in terms of time spent), especially when compared with the treatment of other chronic and disabling conditions. This practical guide comes from the clinical expertise of a leading Italian expert on dependencies. Although the style uses many personal dialogues, this book is not simply a "common sense" approach, but is based on the most rigorous scientific evidence, and will be able to satisfy the need for updates of colleagues in the complex field of smoking.

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