

Understanding risks to disadvantaged smokers during Covid-19

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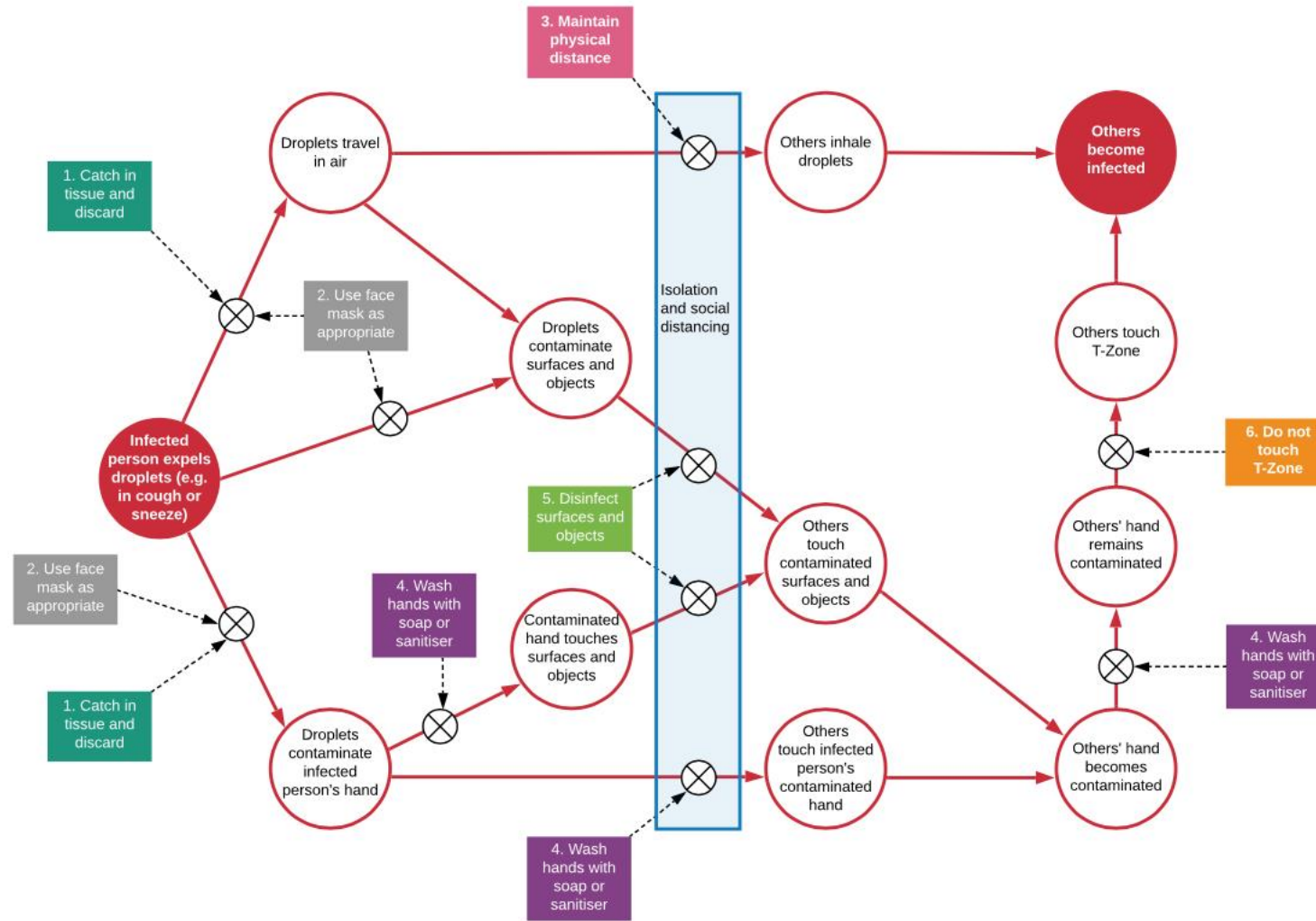
Overview

What are the current issues, where are the risks?:

- Covid19 can be transmitted through air and by contaminated surfaces
- Case example of smokers who face multiple and severe disadvantage, poor mental health, substance use, homelessness
- Risky smoking practices
- The role of *increased* tacit approval during times of stress

Reducing smoking and other health risks:

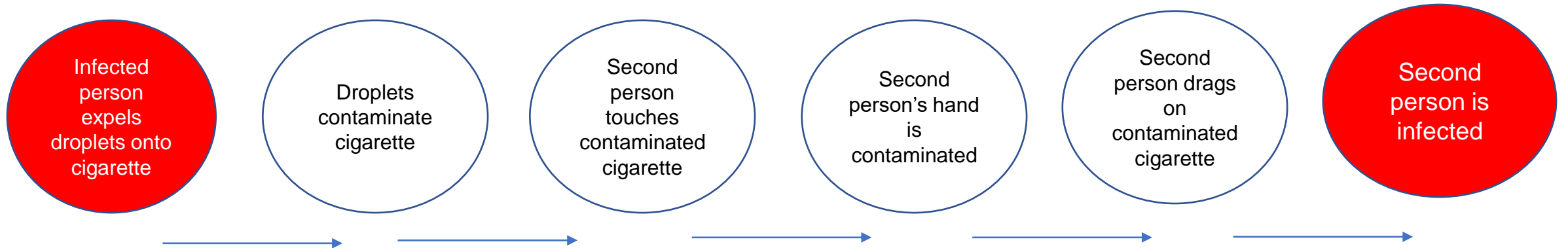
- Looking at tobacco harm reduction as disease prevention



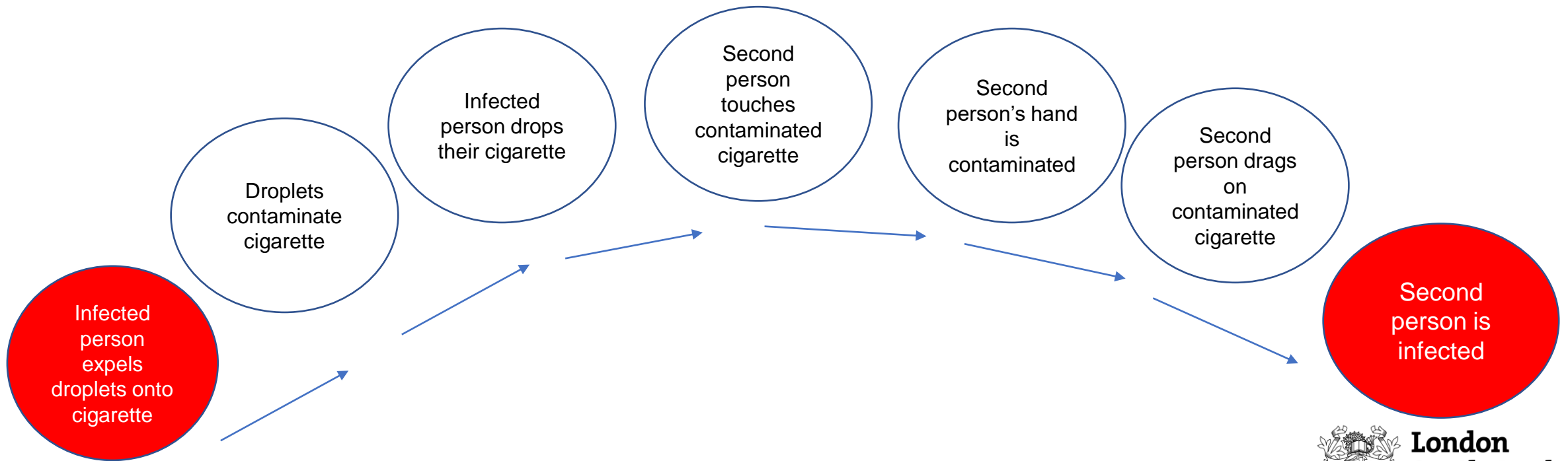
West, R & Michie, S. (2020)
 Routes of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and
 behaviours to block it: a summary. *Qeios*.

Risky smoking practices and disadvantaged smokers

Sharing cigarettes “going twos”
Asking strangers for cigarettes

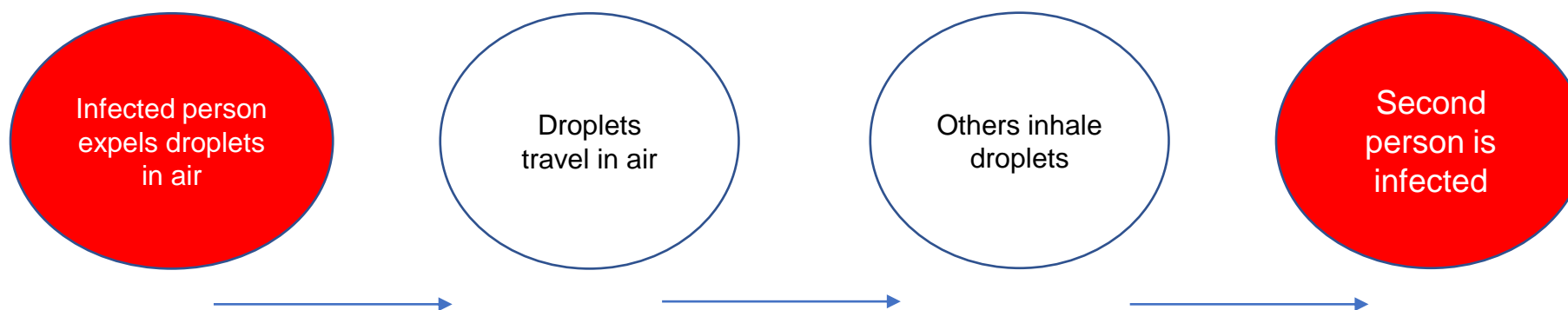


Picking up and smoking directly from or using the tobacco from discarded cigarettes



Purchasing practices: frequently going to the shop, using coins and notes, meeting people to purchase illicit products

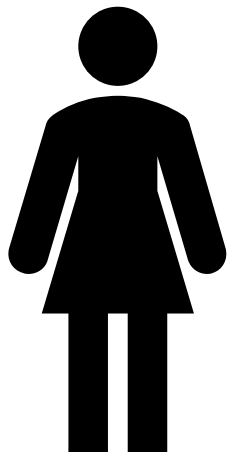
Process before also relevant but also if transaction takes places indoors



Smoking and tacit approval

- Evidence from qualitative literature: Smoking has long been afforded tacit approval to the most disadvantaged.

Harder the
life; >
competing
health and
social
needs



Higher the chance of being talked out of quitting

“Well, she says to me ‘you’re addressing other things at this time, I don’t think you’re ready to sort this out yet (...). She made me not interested’ (10; female, 36) Garner & Ratschen, 2013, BMC Public Health.

Covid-19 > stress, anxiety

Increase risk during COVID-19

Behaviour	Risk to self	Risk of spreading	Long term health risk
Sharing cigarettes “going twos”	X	X	X
Picking up discarded cigarettes	X	X	X
Asking strangers	X	X	X
Frequent purchasing of tobacco and cigarettes	X	X	X
Buying illicit tobacco and cigarettes	X	X	X
Being talked out of quitting			X



SUPPORTED BY

NIHR | National Institute
for Health Research

Exploring the uptake and use of e-cigarettes offered to adults accessing homeless services: a feasibility study



**London
South Bank
University**

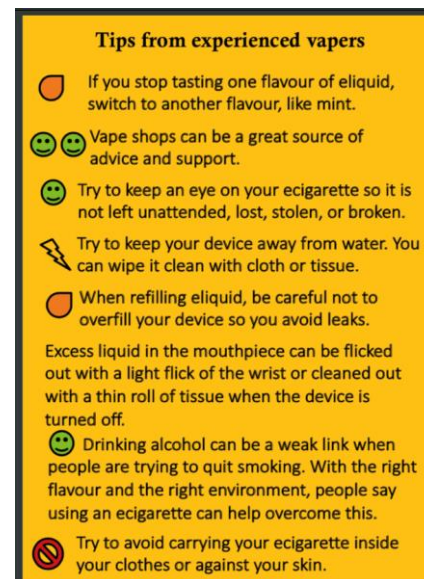
Usual care

- Leaflet with quit advice
- Details of the local SSS



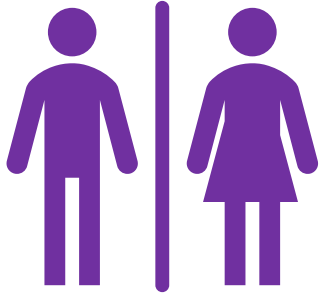
E-Cigarette

- 1 free e-cigarette
- 1 weeks worth of e-liquid (up to 4-weeks)
- Tips and tricks leaflet



3 colors



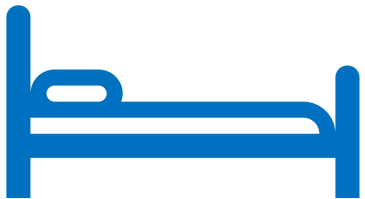


65% male
42.66 years old



73% disability
60% anxiety
55% depression

Cigarettes per day: 20
Nicotine dependence score: 5.6



58% - hostel/supported accommodation

12-week outcomes

	Continuous abstinence	CO reduction >50%	Cigarettes Per Day (CPD) reduction >50%
E-cigarette n = 34 (%)	3 (9%)	7 (21%)	22 (65%)
Usual care n = 21 (%)	0	1 (5%)	3 (14%)



Harm reduction: Sharing cigarettes

N (%)	Baseline	4-week	12-week	24-week
Not at all	20 (51.3)	21 (53.8)	22 (56.4)	18 (46.2)
Occasionally	6 (15.4)	11 (28.2)	13 (33.3)	10 (25.6)
Regularly	2 (5.1)	2 (5.1)	3 (7.7)	5 (12.8)
Daily	11 (28.2)	5 (12.8)	1 (2.6)	6 (15.4)

Harm reduction: Picking up discarded ends

N (%)	Baseline	4-week	12-week	24-week
Not at all	24 (61.5)	31 (79.5)	34 (87.2)	30 (76.9)
Occasionally	11 (28.2)	1 (2.6)	3 (7.7)	4 (10.3)
Regularly	0	3 (7.7)	1 (2.6)	2 (5.1)

Harm reduction: Asked a stranger for a cigarette?

N (%)	Baseline	4-week	12-week	24-week
Not at all	26 (66.7)	33 (84.6)	31 (79.5)	35 (89.7)
Occasionally	9 (23.1)	4 (10.3)	7 (17.9)	2 (5.1)
Regularly	2 (5.1)	0	1 (2.6)	1 (2.6)

Monitoring of the situation

Two surveys running

- ✓ Cancer Research UK (C64552/A29846) funded survey of smoke free policies across homeless centres, with addition of reactions to Covid-19.
- ✓ Survey of SSS/Vape shops, including changes to business as usual during Covid-19 and working with disadvantaged smokers. Data available late in 2020.
- ✓ STS population changes and trends in smoking, smoking cessation and transmission related behaviours.

Thank you

Cox, S. (2020). Risky smoking practices and the coronavirus: A deadly mix for our most vulnerable smokers. BMJ Opinion. <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2020/03/20/sharon-cox-risky-smoking-practices-and-the-coronavirus-a-deadly-mix-for-our-most-vulnerable-smokers/>.

Cox, S. (2020). The last pleasure? <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/last-pleasure>

West, R & Michie, S. (2020). Routes of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and behaviours to block it: a summary. Qeios. <https://www.qeios.com/read/F6M5CB.2>