

**MEDIA RELEASE: 27th October 2005**  
**QUIT Smoking for a Good Nights Sleep**

Sleep and health experts are warning smokers not to use restless nights as an excuse not to quit smoking when studies suggest that it's the cigarettes that are keeping them awake.

Speaking as part of Sleep Awareness Week, Associate Professor Ron Grunstein, Director of Sleep and Circadian Research from Sydney's Woolcock Institute of Medical Research said interrupted sleep and sleep apnoea are very common among heavy smokers.

'Smokers are using restless nights as an excuse not to quit smoking when in fact their sleep will greatly improve when they quit smoking.'

'Nicotine has been shown to alter different stages of sleep, including a change in Rapid Eye Movement and an increase in wakefulness. The stimulatory effects of nicotine make sleep difficult to initiate and maintain,' said A/Prof Grunstein.

'Smokers are also at an increased risk of snoring and sleep-disordered breathing.'

A study of 484 individuals aged 14 to 84 years revealed smokers were more likely to have daytime sleepiness, minor motor vehicle accidents, depression and higher caffeine intake than non-smokers.

'Smoking can have a significant impact on sleep quality and the resulting sleepiness can put other people's lives in danger. Quitting smoking may result in some restless nights but these pass quickly,' said A/Prof Grunstein.

Renee Bittoun, Director, Smoking Cessation Unit at the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research said, 'It is important that would-be quitters put restless nights into context as it is a transient stage of the quitting process.'

'The key to successfully quitting smoking is being able to manage withdrawal symptoms, such as headaches, anxiety, and irritability. Nicotine replacement therapy such as patches, which has shown to double the chance of a successful quit attempt, is a great method to help control cravings,' said Renee Bittoun.

'I'm concerned smokers fear a couple of restless nights more than the possibility of needing chemotherapy or surgery or dying from cancer or heart disease. Smoking kills, whether it is from cancer, coronary heart disease or stroke.'

'Sleep patterns may be affected but they are usually mild and ease after one week.' Ms Bittoun said.