

IT'S NOT SEXY TO SMOKE!

ANI

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WASHINGTON - Smoking damages almost all aspects of sexual, reproductive and child health, claims a new study.

According to the study, published by the British Medical Association (BMA), smoking not only has a serious impact on male and female fertility and child health, but also increases the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth and sudden infant death syndrome or "cot death".

The report further goes on to say that in the UK around 120,000 young men aged 30 to 50 become impotent. It further goes on to report that 1200 cases of malignant cervical cancer and nearly 5000 miscarriages occur annually due to smoking.

Voicing concern over the findings, Vivienne Nathanson, the BMA's Head of Science and Ethics said: "The sheer scale of damage that smoking causes to reproductive and child health is shocking."

"It is quite clear from the litany of appalling effects that something has to be done," he adds.

Smoking also affects a woman's reproductive health by interfering with the sex hormones. Conception in women smokers is reduced by up to 40 per cent per cycle. They also stand the risk of painful and irregular periods and are likely to reach menopause earlier than non-smokers.

Pregnant women smokers face three times the risk of having an underweight baby, which could be susceptible to the risk of poor health, including coronary heart disease and diabetes. Fatal malformations like a cleft palate, placental complications and a decrease in the amount and quality of breast milk are also possible.

"Male smokers have lower sperm counts and a higher proportion of damaged sperm. They have a swimming pattern that is abnormal," the report said.

Both men and women smokers may have a poorer response to

fertility treatment and trouble in conception.

The BMA believes that the banning of smoking in public places and protecting pregnant women from exposure to second-hand smoke can help solve the problem.

It wants the British government to take corrective steps and also suggests that under European law, pregnant women who cannot be ensured protection from second hand smoke in the workplace, should be entitled to leave on full pay during the time of their pregnancy.