

Quit smoking to ease stress levels

New York, June 17: Smokers often say they need a cigarette to calm their nerves but a British study has found that chronic stress levels may go down after a person kicks the habit.

A study of 469 smokers who tried to quit after being hospitalized for heart disease found that those who stayed away from cigarettes for a year reported a reduction in their perceived stress levels.

Stress levels were essentially unchanged among heart patients who went back to smoking, according to researchers from Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry.

The study, reported in the journal *Addiction* supported

the theory that, at least for some people, smoking actually contributes to chronic stress.

"Smokers often see cigarettes as a tool to manage stress, and ex-smokers sometimes return to smoking in the belief that this will help them cope with a stressful life event," researcher Peter Hajek reported in an email to Reuters Life.

Yet studies have shown that non-smokers tend to report lower stress levels than smokers do.

The reason for that difference has been unclear, but it could mean that people vulnerable to stress are more likely to take up smoking. —
Reuters