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The pack-a-day habit came out of desire to ease hernia pain Chinese toddler is world's youngest chain smoker



Liang Liang earned the dubious record of the world's youngest chain smoker

DUBAI (Al Arabiya)

Two-year-old Tong Liangliang has little interest in the pacifiers and bottles typically favored by others his age and instead opted for cigarettes, and is now up to a pack a day, earning the Chinese toddler the dubious record of the world's youngest chain smoker.

The toddler's father encouraged him to take up smoking when he was one-and-a-half years old, thinking it would alleviate the pain he suffered from a hernia until he was old enough to undergo surgery, the German newspaper Bild reported Tuesday.

The father did not take his son's smoking addiction seriously until Liang became a pack-a-day smoker. Now Liang resists all his father's attempts to take away his only pain killer.

But doctors say that smoking can aggravate hernias, because it induces frequent coughing that presses on abdominal and chest muscles and creates muscle tension.

But studies presented to the American Society of Anesthesiologists' have shown that both nicotine and chili peppers are good pain killers, especially after surgical operations. Most researchers, however, note that the risks of nicotine addiction seem to outweigh its potential benefits.

Previous title rejected

In 2005, a 37-year-old Chinese man requested he be added to the Guinness Book of World Records after claiming he started smoking when he was three and was therefore the world's youngest smoker. Guinness rejected the request since it was seen as promoting an unhealthy habit.

China is home to 311 million smokers, ranking it first in terms of countries with the most smokers,

followed by India with 229 million smokers.

According to studies conducted by the American Cancer Society and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, around six million people die of smoking each year. This number is expected to reach eight million by 2030, with the sharpest rise occurring in developing countries.

(Translated from the Arabic by Sonia Farid)