

How many times does it take a smoker to quit smoking?

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THE ONTARIO
TOBACCO
RESEARCH
UNIT

UNITÉ
DE RECHERCHE
SUR LE TABAC
DE L'ONTARIO

Generating knowledge for public health

A life history of smoking



ONTARIO TOBACCO SURVEY

**4500 ONTARIO SMOKERS (18+) FOLLOWED
EVERY 6 MONTHS FOR UP TO 3 YEARS**

1

On average, smokers
try to quit **once a year**

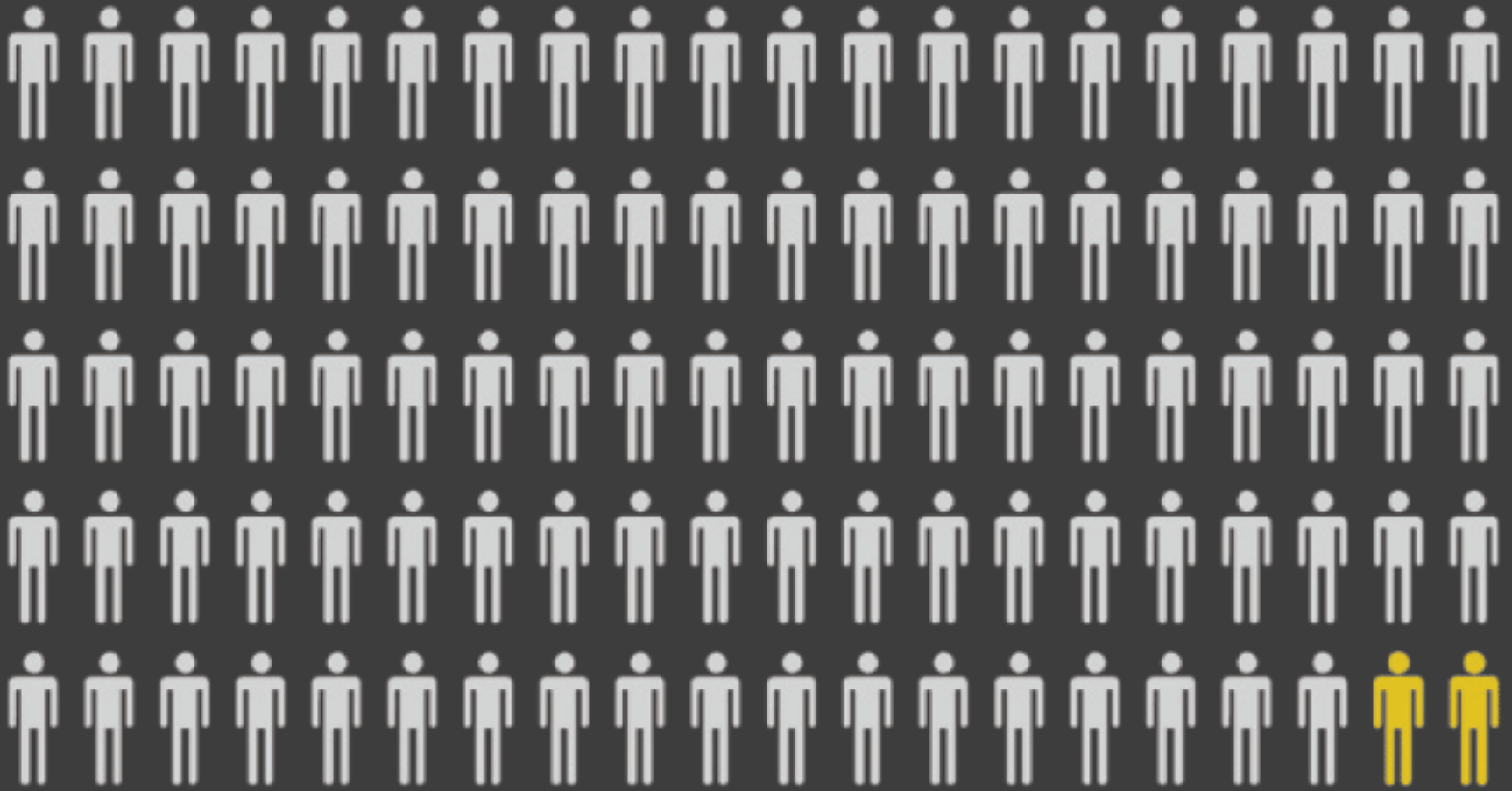


that's

5 million

quit attempts every year

but...



only **2%** are successful



7 days

Average **length of a quit attempt** for a daily smoker

K-M Survival Curve Time to Relapse

Median attempt for
daily smoker:
7 days*



Is it a quit attempt if it doesn't last a day?

- 9% of serious quit attempts don't last 24 hours
- More likely to have higher intentions to quit, higher dependence
- 24 hours is an outcome not a start

**HOW MANY TIMES DO
SMOKERS TRY BEFORE
QUITTING FOR GOOD?**



RainbowHealthOntario

@RainbowHealthOn



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Average is 5-7 attempts to quit smoking for good @TOPublicHealth has free quit kits to help bit.ly /TFhqwt #quitchat

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... remain abstinent for only two days. Only 5-10% of those trying to quit for good. Most smokers make 5-7 attempts before they quit. [6] Similarly, almost all (89.5%) individuals seeking treatment for their first one previous weight loss attempt. In the general population, only 10% manage to lose weight by dieting. [7]

Remember, everyone responds differently to quitting smoking. Some people quit on the first try, but more often it takes people 5-7 attempts to successfully quit. If you have a relapse, don't worry about it! Having a relapse is a rule rather than an exception.



Smokers' Helpline We know that for many people, it may take 5-7 attempts to be smoke-free for good. Quitting is an on-going process, even while being smoke-free it may take planning and support.

The less you smoke, the better. If you're looking for help, look on the online sites for help. If you're feeling a sense of weakness, you're not alone. It takes 7-10 attempts to quit, even harder as nicotine craving, only to find themselves relapsing. It is important to give credit for every attempt. On average, one out of every 10 smokers quit 12-14 times before they are eventually successful.¹

... people make 5-7 attempts before they finally successfully stop smoking. ... inina cigarette free for ... **Good Work (7+ / 0-)** ... - 9 attempts to actually quit. ... n I was 18 (started smoking a cigarette when I am around 18 years (I'm 41 now) it took me 9 attempts before they finally suc...

It takes 5-7 attempts to be successful in quitting. There are many resources available to help you quit!

... end of the road. You should view...

IARD

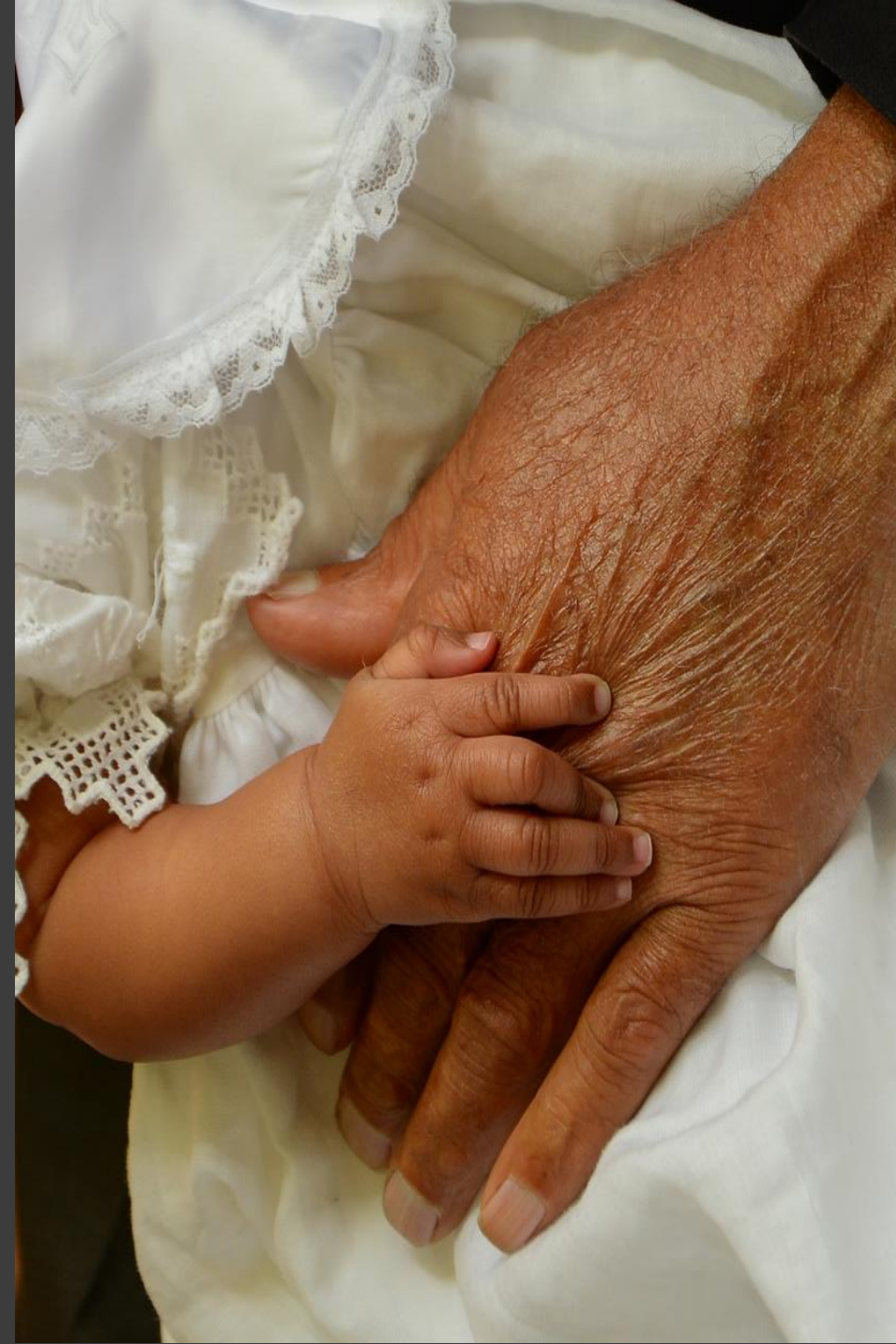
Most smokers try to quit 5-7 times before they are successful.²

We don't really know

- 1. Cross-sectional**
- 2. Biased recall of quit attempts**
- 3. Based only on successful quitters**

Designing a conclusive study

- Use cross-sectional age specific mortality rates to create a theoretical cohort lasting from birth to death.
- Use quit attempt specific success rates to create a theoretical cohort lasting from the first to the last quit attempt.



New methodology

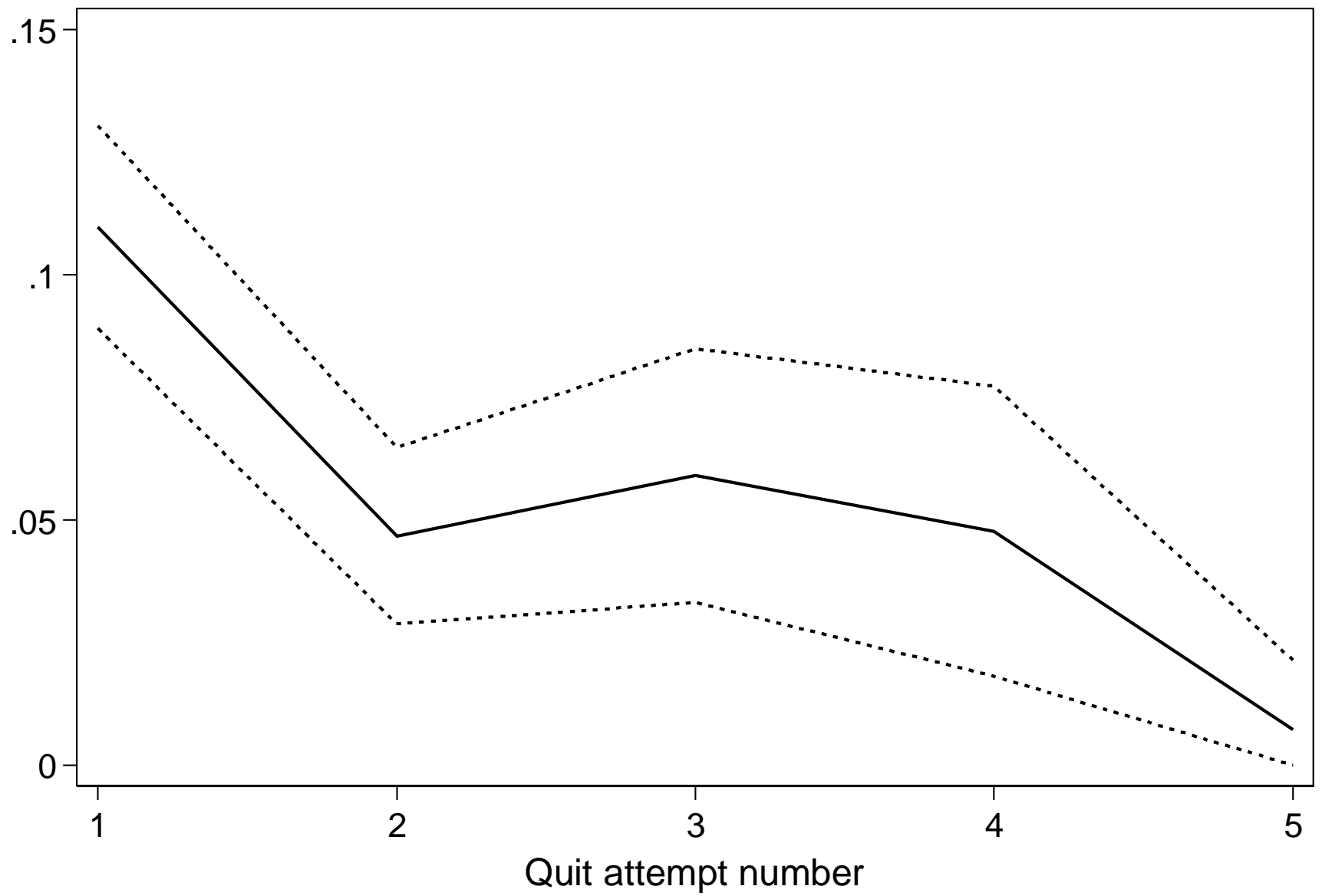
Use standard life table methodology to create a lifetime cohort

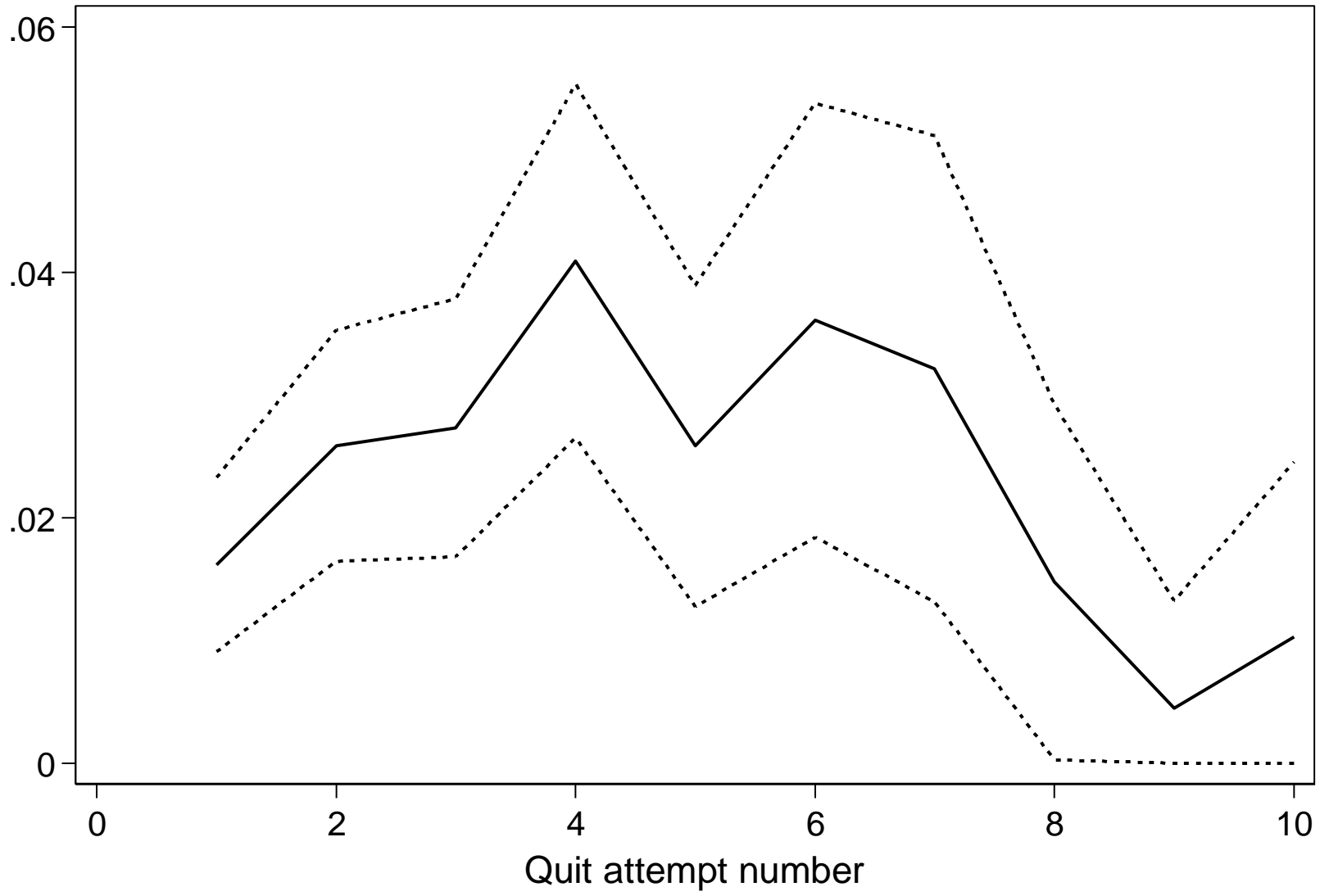
Outcome successful quitting rather than death

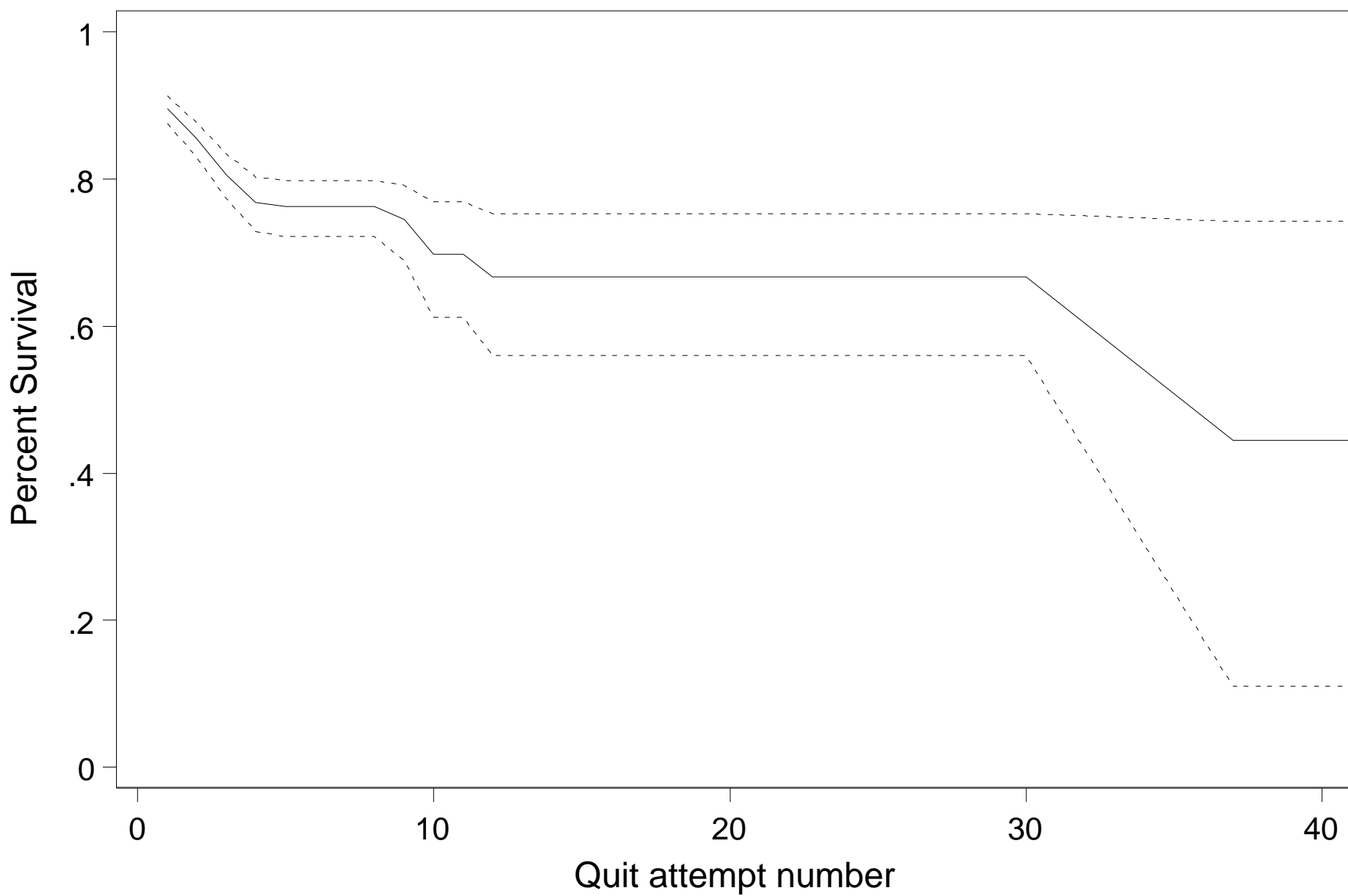
Ontario Tobacco Survey

- Included 1277 current smokers at baseline who made a serious quit attempt in the first 3 follow ups









30

Average **number of times**
it takes a smoker to quit
successfully



A more realistic value?



A more realistic value?

Can make other assumptions

Recalled attempts among successful
quitters

6.3  npts

A more realistic value?

Can make other assumptions

Every quit attempt has the same chance of success

19.6  empts

A more realistic value?

Can make other assumptions

Using the lifetable, but including recalled attempt

142  empts

30

Average **number of times**
it takes a smoker to quit
successfully



Implications

- 5-7 attempts underestimates the difficulty in quitting
- A substantial proportion of smokers are never successful at quitting
- How should the difficulty of quitting be communicated? A larger question.



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Generating knowledge for public health

Findings from the Ontario Tobacco Survey and other OTRU studies. To see a poster online and for more details, including references, go to:

<http://otru.org/quitting-smoking-in-ontario/>

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