

## Tobacco Use and Other Lifestyle Practices Among School Going Children of Age Group 13 to 17 Years: A Cross-Sectional Survey



### Medical Science

**KEYWORDS :** Tobacco use, other lifestyle practices, school going children

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study was aimed to assess the tobacco use and other lifestyle practices among school going children of age group 13 to 17 years. Quantitative approach with descriptive design was used. 800 subjects were selected by cluster sampling technique from four schools in Trivandrum district. Self-administered structured questionnaire was used to assess the tobacco use and other lifestyle practices in school going children. The present study showed that prevalence of tobacco use in boys was 24.2% and overall prevalence of alcohol consumption was 28.5%. More than half of subjects had moderate level of physical activity and 23.9% of subjects consumed bakery food items once a week .31.4 % of subjects consumed fruits daily and 67.9% consumed dairy products on a daily basis. 16.9% of subjects had less than 6 hours of sleep per day. 31.8 % of students watched television or used internet for 1- 2 hours per day and 44.5 % of subjects watched television or used internet at night time. These findings emphasize the need for a well-established school health program.*

### Introduction

Children are future asset of a nation. Children aged between 10- 19 years of age constitute 22.8% of population. Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal adulthood<sup>2</sup>. There are several changes occurring during this period namely biological, cognitive, emotional and social. The biological changes include the onset of puberty, the cognitive changes include emergence of more advanced cognitive abilities, the emotional changes include self-image, intimacy, relation with adults and peer groups and finally social changes include transition into new roles in the society<sup>2</sup>. As a result of these changes adolescents are more susceptible to develop several unhealthy habits like use of tobacco, alcohol, excessive use of junk food or fast food and lack of exercise. It is well documented that behaviors developed during this period influence health in adulthood.

Several health compromising behaviors (e.g. Tobacco use, alcohol consumption, use of junk food, inadequate sleep) as well as health enhancing behaviors (e.g. physical exercise) is adopted in adolescence and they often persist into adulthood<sup>3</sup>. The World Health Organization estimates that 70% of premature deaths among adults are due to behavior (smoking, illicit drug use, reckless driving) initiated during adolescence<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, helping adolescents establish healthy lifestyles and avoid developing health risk behaviors is crucial and should be started before these behaviors are firmly established.

The current epidemiological transition due to rapid urbanization and globalization in India leads to a great concern on increasing prevalence of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs). The major risk factors for NCDs are diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use, alcohol consumption and stress and there exists an extensive literature supporting that such risk factors are increasing among the adolescents. World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that at least 80% of the premature heart diseases, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and 40% of cancer could be prevented through healthy diet, regular physical activity and avoidance of tobacco products. The majority of NCDs can be averted through interventions & policies that reduce these major risk factors<sup>5, 6</sup>.

Recent studies on adolescents reveal that determinants like favorable attitudes toward substance abuse, inadequate knowledge about substance abuse and health, family or peer influence, influence of mass- media and stress contribute to development of this unhealthy lifestyle in adolescents. Use of tobacco, alcohol

and other substances among children and adolescents are a public health concern in several parts of the world including India. The childhood and adolescent are important formative years of life during which the child acquires academic, cognitive, social and life's skills. Any substance abuse or unhealthy lifestyle practices at this age is likely to interfere with normal child development and may have a lasting impact on future life. Not only the child, but the family and society as a whole are likely to be affected as a result of early onset substance use<sup>7, 8</sup>.

### Objectives

1. To assess the prevalence and pattern of tobacco use among school going children of age group 13 to 17 years
2. To assess the prevalence and pattern of other lifestyle practices among school going children of age group 13 to 17 years
3. To determine association of tobacco use and other lifestyle practices among school going children of age group 13 to 17 years with their socio-personal data
4. To compare the tobacco use and other lifestyle practices among children of government and private schools

### Assumptions

- λ Unhealthy habits like tobacco use and alcoholism is seen among adolescents.
- λ Lifestyle practices among adolescents are variable.
- λ Subjects provide honest responses to the questions asked.

### Materials and Methods:

The investigator adopted quantitative approach for this study using a descriptive design. Tobacco use, other lifestyle practices like alcohol use, physical activity, dietary pattern, sleep pattern, television viewing and internet usage and socio personal variables like age gender ,place of residence, class level of students ,educational status of parents ,occupation of parents ,type of family, family income and parent's tobacco use and alcoholism were the variables for this study.

This study was conducted in four selected schools in Trivandrum district (two government and two private schools). Population for this study consisted of school going children of age group 13 to 17 years

### Sample selection criteria

Inclusion criteria:-Students of age group 13-17 yrs.

### Exclusion criteria:-

- Adolescents who doesn't attend regular school.
- Students who were not willing to participate

### Sample

Sample for the study consisted of 800 school going children aged between 13 and 17 years (from class VIII to XII) from four selected schools in Trivandrum district.

**Sampling technique:** Cluster sampling.

**Tools / Instruments:** Self-administered structured questionnaire was used

### Data collection procedure: -

Permission was obtained from institutional research committee and institutional ethical committee of Sree Gokulam Medical College Hospital. Formal permission was obtained from authorities of schools selected to conduct the study. Then, by cluster sampling students who are fulfilling inclusion criteria were selected. An elaborative briefing on the questionnaire, research study and its purpose was given to all the students of the class prior to data collection. After that informed consent from each subject were obtained. After giving instructions for questionnaire completion, it was administered to students and collected back after scrutinizing for completeness. Then, researchers answered students' queries regarding healthy lifestyle practices and hazards of unhealthy lifestyle practices.

### Results:

- λ Overall prevalence of tobacco use was 17.24% and is seen only in boys.
- λ Overall prevalence of alcohol consumption was 28.5%.
- λ More than one fourth (26.3%) of subjects used tobacco products and consumed alcohol.
- λ More than half of subjects had moderate level of physical activity.
- λ 23.9% of subjects consumed bakery food items once a week.
- λ 31.4 % of subjects consume fruits daily and 67.9% consume dairy products daily.
- λ Majority consumed breakfast, lunch and dinner daily.
- λ Majority (75.8%) of subjects had normal sleep duration and 16.9% of subjects sleep for less than 6 hours a day.
- λ 31.8 % of students watch television or use internet for 1- 2 hours per day and 44.5 % of subjects watch television or use internet at night time. Night time television watching and internet usage is seen more in boys.
- λ There is significant difference in tobacco use, alcohol consumption, physical activity and television viewing and internet usage among students of government and private schools.

### Nursing implications

The present study has implications in nursing service, nursing education, nursing administration and nursing research.

Community health nurse should conduct health awareness campaigns regarding healthy lifestyle practices and hazards of unhealthy practices like tobacco use, alcohol consumption, inadequate physical activity, and improper dietary pattern.

- Screening programme for identifying at risk adolescents in school health programme.
- Curriculum should include topics of healthy lifestyle, and development of school health programme.
- Lobbying to implement policies by government to curtail the availability of tobacco products and alcohol to school going children.
- Nurse administrators should collaborate with the Ministry of Health in providing health education using mass media regarding healthy lifestyle practices.
- Support the school authority to implement anti tobacco use and anti alcohol consumption committees.
- Extend support for the anti-tobacco control programmes.
- Prospective studies can be conducted to assess the health hazards of tobacco use, alcohol consumption, sedentary activity and consumption of junk food.

### Discussion:

The study on tobacco use and other lifestyle practices was conducted among 800 school going children of age group 13 to 17 years, selected from two government and two private schools in Trivandrum through cluster sampling. The study was conducted from 5/1/15 to 3/2/15. The present study showed that prevalence of tobacco use in boys was 24.2% and overall prevalence of alcohol consumption was 28.5%. More than half of subjects had moderate level of physical activity and 23.9% of subjects consumed bakery food items once a week. 31.4 % of subjects consumed fruits daily and 67.9% consumed dairy products on a daily basis. 16.9% of subjects had less than 6 hours of sleep per day. 31.8 % of students watched television or used internet for 1- 2 hours per day and 44.5 % of subjects watched television or used internet at night time. There was a significant difference in tobacco use, alcohol consumption, physical activity and television viewing and internet usage among students of government and private schools. These findings emphasized the need of a well-established school health program.

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