

PREVALENCE OF TOBACCO USE AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN OF GANDHINAGAR

Periodontology

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Tobacco use has become pandemic among school children. One of the leading institution world banks has reported that nearly 1 million children and adolescents all over the world begin using tobacco every day. In developing countries, the most crucial age of initiation of tobacco use is during early adulthood.

Material and Method: A cross sectional study was designed in Government high school of Gandhinagar. From each school, 50 students were randomly chosen with computer-generated code. Data was acquired using a pre-structured questionnaire.

Results: A total of 18% were tobacco users. Five per cent of people were tobacco addicts. Out of the total, 92 subjects were tobacco users, ranging from age 12 to 15 years. The overall prevalence was found to be 5.7% and was highest among the 15-year age group.

Conclusion: In order to control the tobacco abuse at the early age of life, appropriate health knowledge and counseling are required.

KEYWORDS

Tobacco, Adolescents, Health Knowledge, Counseling

INTRODUCTION

Tobacco use has become pandemic among school children¹. It is the most common chronic problem found among the school going children of Gujarat. One of the leading institution world bank has reported that nearly 1 million children and adolescents all over the world begin using tobacco every day². Among them, most of the children will continue using it until adulthood. This leads to the premature death of many children. In India, there are 2.4 billion people in the age group of 18 years and younger, and hence it becomes the target of the tobacco industry. It is estimated that tobacco related diseases will kill approximately 250 million of today's children³. A total of 5 million people dies of tobacco abuse every, and it is expected to increase by 10 million per year.

India is one of the most populated countries in the world. India is one of the largest producers and consumer of tobacco in the world⁴. Tobacco use is prevalent since ancient times in India. Tobacco is used in various forms and combination in India. There is very less awareness among the people, mainly due to lack of proper education with regards to tobacco use and its well effects. The initiation age of tobacco use is as early as 12 years. It is estimated that 5500 adolescents start using tobacco every year in India⁵.

In developing countries, the most crucial age of initiation of tobacco use is during early adulthood. Most of them start at an early age of 18 years, and some begin even at 10 years. An assessment in 1999-2001 showed that 5500 adolescents started using tobacco every day in India, coupling with the 4 million young people, under the age of 15, who are already tobacco user. There are multiple factors like abuse among family members, family conflicts, poor school performance etc. that influence the use of tobacco among adolescents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was approved by the institutional review board and ethical committee. A questioner was developed for this cross-sectional study. All the government high school of Gandhinagar was included in the study. The age group of the subjects was limited to 15 years. Using population proportionate to size sampling methodology, ten clusters were selected. From each school, 50 students were randomly chosen with computer-generated code. The age of the subjects was verified with the help of school records. The informed consent was signed by parents on behalf of the students. Data was acquired using a pre-structured questionnaire. This questionnaire was distributed individually to each child. The data were collected on age, gender, socioeconomic profile, occupation and literacy of parents, religion,

household income, family structure etc. Additionally, data was also obtained on tobacco consumption, frequency of use, amount of use, and place of consumption.

RESULTS

A total of 500 children from two five randomly selected schools participated in this cross-sectional study. A total of 18% were tobacco users. Five per cent of people were tobacco addicts. Among the habituates, the mean age of chewing habits was 12.75 ± 3.07 . Among the reason for initiation of tobacco, the practice was influenced by elders (38.04%) and different types of tension (33.69%). About 32% of tobacco users were addicted, and 22% used it for taste. Most of the tobacco for consumption was acquired by self-purchase (31%) of borrowing from others (31%). Some unusual habits like stealing (4%) were also reported. A total number of 204 (40.8%) of siblings were also affected by tobacco.

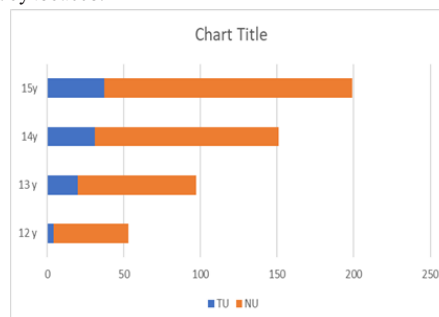


Fig 1: Distribution Of Tobacco Users According To Age.

Table 1: Reasons For Initiation Of Tobacco Habit.

Cause	n(%)
Peer pressure	5 (5.43%)
Influence of elders	35 (38.04%)
To achieve aim	21 (22.82%)
Tension	31 (33.69%)

Table 2: Response After The Use Of Tobacco.

Response	n (%)
Felt Good	16 (17%)
Tastes good	20 (21.73%)
Addiction	30 (32.60%)
None of the above	26 (28.26%)

Table 3: Methods Of Acquiring Tobacco.

Methods	n(%)
Self purchase	30 (32.60%)
Ask other to buy	28 (30.43%)
Borrow from other	30 (32.60%)
Steal	4 (4.34%)

Table 4: Use Of Tobacco By Siblings.

Response	n (%)
Yes	204 (40.8%)
No	216 (43.2%)
Don't Know	35 (7%)
No siblings	45 (9%)

DISCUSSION

Tobacco use among the children is increasing day by day and reaching to a pandemic level. The world bank has reported that approximately 100000 adolescents and children start smoking every day. Among these, most of them continue smoking till adulthood, and many of these smokers are expected to suffer from cancer and die prematurely⁶. If this smoking grew up at the present rate, tobacco would kill nearly 3 billion of today's children. India hosts the second largest number of people and is the third largest producer of tobacco⁷. It is also the third-largest consumer of tobacco products. There are many different forms of tobacco that are prevalent among the individuals⁸. Considering the enormous health complication associated with tobacco use, it is urgent and essential to investigate the factors leading to use and to plan strategies to reduce intake. The government should recognize the urgency and formulate the steps to reduce the use of it.

A total of 500 students were included in the study. Out of the total, 92 subjects were tobacco users, ranging from age 12 to 15 years (Graph 1). Among these maximum users belonged in the age group of 15 years and 14-year age group followed by 13- and 12-year age group. The overall prevalence was found to be 5.7% and was highest among the 15-year age group. In the present study, we tried to find the rationale behind the use of tobacco addiction. It depicted that there was an ease of buying tobacco in the neighbourhood. It was also due to personal and social factors. Most of the students stated that they were influenced by elders (38%) and tension (33%). Most of the study have shown that the history of tobacco in the family is positively associated with next-generation use^{9,10}. Harakeh et al. in his study concluded that tobacco use by the elders influenced the youngsters¹¹. However, in addition, this study also found that youngsters were also influenced by movies and ads¹².

The prevalence of adolescent tobacco use estimated was 13.14% among 3041 users of 82 schools in Canada¹³. In our study, the parents and children tobacco prevalence was noted at 10.52 %. When our studies are compared to a Canadian study, it was observed that the prevalence of tobacco users was more in Canada. Even in Canadian research, it showed that parental use of tobacco was an important reason for the increase in tobacco use among children. In Gujarat, the prevalence of smoking and tobacco chewing was reported to be 14.61% and 66.23% respectively. Addiction to tobacco use was most common in the age group of 17–19 years, and it showed that cravings increase with age. A cross-sectional study conducted in Bengaluru among adolescents reported a prevalence of 6.8%. According to the study, the factors which induced tobacco use and reasons for continuing use among students were style 58.8%, relieves tensions 17.6%, pleasurable 11.8%, and 8.8% because of their friends. Another survey in Gujarat has shown a prevalence of 3.3% smoking in males. It also showed that boys were more at risk whose parents were having a tobacco habit.

Limitations of this study included recall bias and conscious falsification by the children. A small number of sample size was also a hindrance to a definitive result. Only school-going children were included in this study.

CONCLUSION

Despite the above shortcomings, this study found some significant correlation in tobacco habits. The elder group influence was seen as the reason for initiating this habit in the majority of the cases. In order to control the tobacco abuse at the early age of life, appropriate health knowledge and counselling are required. This study encourages the need for school-based tobacco cessation programme. Joint efforts by teachers, family, and community welfare are needed to control the menace of tobacco.

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