

SMOKING HABIT IN MEDICAL STUDENTS
OF AIN SHAMS FACULTY OF MEDICINE

THESIS

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BY

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INTRODUCTION
and
AIM OF THE WORK

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Smoking nearly always begins in adolescence for psycho-social reasons, including parental smoking, curiosity , smoking among friends and assertion of independence .

Once smoking becomes regular, the pharmacological properties of nicotine play a major part in the persistence of the habit which appears to become advantageous to the smoker's mode or life response, yet is potentially lethal.

There are insufficient data about the smoking habit in the Egyptian population, and the study of the smoking habit in different sections of the population may help in the assessment of the size of the smoking epidemic in Egypt .

This survey is intended to be carried out among medical students in Ain Shams Faculty of Medicine .

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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"(A) Socioenvironmental aspect of smoking"

The social image of cigarette smoking among early and middle non-smoking adolescents is assessed and investigated, whether that social image serves to motivate smoking initiation . Based on considerations of self-esteem and susceptibility to social influence, social image factors were predicted to be related to intentions to smoke more for early adolescents and for girls .

Results indicate that the social image of both male and female smokers was an ambivalent one for both early and middle adolescents .In terms of the relationship of the social image to smoking intentions, early adolescent girls had intentions that were best predicted by the perceived negative qualities for smoking .

For middle adolescents, smoking intentions were related to the positive social assets of smoking, especially interest in the opposite sex . Results suggest that prevention strategies for early adolescent girls should focus on the negative results of smoking, strategies for middle adolescents should either attack the positive image of the smoker or provide alternative means of self image improvement(Barton et al., 1982) .

Peer smoking has been shown to have the strongest relationship to current smoking, and parental, sibling and peer smoking behaviours were combined into one environmental scale . The scale was higher among children who tried smoking than among those who did not .

A better understanding of the diffusion-adoption principle should help in developing rational methods for intervention in cigarette smoking or prevention of cigarette smoking at an early age (Hunter et al., 1982) .

In 1979, as the first stage in the evaluation of an educational strategy to discourage children from smoking, over 6,000 , 10 to 12 years old primary school children in the Hunter Health Region (New South Wales Australia) were surveyed to assess the prevalence of smoking and to identify some of the social and personal factors associated with this phenomenon . Friends smoking behaviour was the best predictor of the child's smoking status, followed in order by approval of advertising, siblings, smoking behaviour, amount of money available to spend weekly, sex, age, and finally parents smoking habits .

Other factors such as size of the family, country of birth of parents, position of the child in the family , father's occupation, having a single parent and urban or

non-urban location of schools were all significantly associated with smoking prevalence in these children. Linear modelling techniques used in the analysis showed girls and non-smokers to have less favouring attitudes to smoking and tobacco advertising than boys and smokers . Significant differences in knowledge occurred between categories of smokers . Most children claiming not to smoke disapproved advertising and did not intend to smoke in the future . Among current smokers, some with neutral or favouring attitudes were ambivalent about future smoking.

The data suggested that intervention in the field of cigarette advertising may be the most direct and effective means of reducing prevalence of smoking in children (O'Connell et al., 1981) .

One hundred and seventy-five 10 to 11 years old children from five Australian primary schools were surveyed to determine the effects of cigarette advertising . Forty-five percent of the children were from three schools which are situated in areas with low socioeconomic level, a multi-racial composition, and a higher than average proportion of children with physical, emotional and learning problems. The remainder of the children (54.9 %) were from schools in predominantly middle-class areas . Results showed that

children feel that cigarette advertisements are intended to lead people, including children to take up smoking . The fact that the children identified the heavily advertised cigarettes as those most popular with adults and children appears to indicate that cigarette brand performances of children are determined by advertising . The survey data also provided evidence of underestimation by the children of the hazard that cigarette smoking presents to life (Fisher and Magnus, 1981) .

In 1974 and 1975 secondary school children in an English Country answered a questionnaire on their smoking behaviour, social activities and attitudes toward various issues, to determine certain factors associated with increased risk of smoking by them .

An analysis revealed certain factors that were associated with increased risk of smoking in 1975 . The most important factors were the extent of smokers involvement in social activities, the smoking behaviour of their parents, siblings and friends and their own attitudes and belief about smoking (Murray et al., 1983) .

In Malaysia, the number of cigarette smokers has been increasing by about five to seven percent in the last 10 years.

In 1975, a study by a leading newspaper showed that 1.25 million or 20 % of the total adult population smoked . Most of them (91 %) were males . Nearly, three quarters of them (74 %) were in the lower socioeconomic classes, 60 % of them were Malays, 31 % Chinese and 8 % Indians .

The average cigarette consumption per adult aged 15 years and above had risen from 1,440 per year in 1965 to over 2,000 per year in 1978, an increase of 44 % . In 1977, over 10 billion cigarettes were consumed .

Recent studies of secondary school children showed that the smoking incidence is about 20 %, about half of whom were habitual smokers, about 20 % of them have smoked for over three years . As for the reasons, more than half smoked for fun and 30 % were influenced by friends; 20 % were ignorant of the dangers of smoking . Concern had been shown smokers not so much due to the health dangers of cigarettes but due to close association with drug addiction; this was revealed in a study showing that almost all the young drug addicts began their habit through cigarette smoking .

Except for elderly villagers , smoking is still uncommon in women . A recent study of women attending an obstetrics

clinic showed only 3 % were smoking in contrast with 41 % of their husbands who smoked(Teon, 1983) .

In 1974, a survey was carried out among Norwegian school children to find the extent of smoking in the age group 12 - 15 years . Compared with previous studies , the percentage of smokers among girls had increased considerably . The tendencies found in many western industrialized countries that smoking is increasing among girls more than among boys, and that boys are reducing smoking to a greater extent than are girls . Norway may be divided into geographical areas according to differences in the smoking habits of girls and boys . In the southern and western countries, girls had not surpassed boys to the same extent as in the rest of the country . From previous political cultural research, it is known that the south and west are characterized by temperance and prohibition movements, higher frequencies of religious attendance and distinctiveness in voting behaviour .

When both parents smoked, older sisters and brothers smoked, best friend smoked, and smokers were permitted to smoke . On the contrary, an environment of non-smokers and no permission to smoke reduce the probability of being a daily smoker to almost zero (Aaro et al., 1981) .

(B) " Smoking and Sex "

Women are the new smokers . While smoking rates among men have fallen continuously over the past decade, women have been taking up the habit . This is reflected in the increasing numbers of women dying from disease and cancer. The many social factors involved in women's smoking are shifted through, from starting to smoke in grade school as a display of emancipation, continuing to smoke as a way of being in control of emotions, then as an adult, afraid to stop for fear of gaining weight and finally, failing attempts to quit from lack of confidence to carry through . The relationship between smoking and changes in the position of women is also examined showing how women are being exploited by the tobacco industry (Jacobson, 1981) .

Behind the current pattern of women's smoking habits lies a long history which reflects the changing roles and socio-economic status of women in society .

To understand the reasons why women smoke and to suggest possible methods of prevention, it is important to know how the present situation has been reached . Women have never been isolated from tobacco . Some have tentatively tried smoking, others have taken up the habit and others have reacted strongly against the habit of smoking .

Contemporary diaries, literature and art from the introduction of tobacco to present day, provide insights into the changing image of smoking; the women who smoked and their reasons of smoking (Charlton, 1983) .

Women and men have differed substantially in their smoking behaviour . Areas of difference include the data of the onset of wide spread cigarette use, the rate of diffusion and smoking among successive cohorts, the intensity of smoking and the type of cigarettes smoked .

Recently, however, the smoking behaviour of men and women has become increasingly similar . While the reasons for the historical differences in smoking by sex are of interest, there are differences in smoking by sex over the past decade (Lewit , 1983) .

An analysis of tobacco use among women with comparative reference to men is provided, including discussions on anthropological surveys, psychological and physiological factors, health risk, pregnancy and smoking cessation .

Historically, women in the United States began to take up cigarette smoking in significant number after 1930. Epidemiological data suggest that the smoking habits of