Smoking habits of adolescent students in Tehran

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Abstract: Background: cigarette smoking is among the main preventable causes of untimely death, morbidity, and mortality in the world. Various reasons have been suggested for cigarette smoking among students which are mostly related to the culture and customs of a country. This study aimed to evaluate the factors associated with cigarette smoking among students.

Material and methods: This cross-sectional analytical study was conducted in Tehran in 2008 and used "Global Youth Tobacco Survey" (GYTS) self-administered questionnaire for data collection. A total of 4523 students (2251 girls and 2272 boys) were selected by using randomized multi-stage cluster sampling. SPSS version 16 software, chi-square test, and logistic regression test were used for data analysis.

Results: A total of 4523 students (49.8% girls and 50.2% boys) with a mean age of 14.69±2.09 yrs were evaluated. The prevalence of smoking experience, current smoking, and current regular smoking among students was 25.5%, 7.4%, and 1.9% respectively. The score of knowledge was 5.29±1.29 for all students, 5.34±1.23 for nonsmoker students, and 4.57±1.74 for current smokers (p<0.01). The mean score of attitude towards smoking was 27.29±7.41 for all students, 27.56±7.20 for nonsmoker and 21.10±7.69 for current smokers. The difference between the scores of current smokers and nonsmoker was statistically significant (p<0.01). In evaluation of the correlation between cigarette smoking and different variables, several factors were found to increase the likelihood of smoking among students including the male gender, older age, lower grades, having smoker friends, pocket money more than 300,000 Rials per month, exposure to family members’ smoking, lack of parental advice, low score of knowledge, low score for attitude, passive smoking (exposure to secondhand smoke at home or outside), poor perception of anti-smoking message broadcasting by the media, watching actors smoking (cigarette or hookah) in movies, and last but not least viewing smoking advertisement and cigarette commercials (OR=1.464-57.707).

Conclusion: Considering our study findings, planning and implementation of educational tobacco control programs are required at schools aiming at preventing cigarette smoking by increasing the knowledge and correcting the attitude of students.