Knowledge, attitude, and perception on smoking habits in adolescence in rural area (thiruvallur district)

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INTRODUCTION

Teenagers and young adults have their whole lives to look forward to. Sure, there will be ups and downs, tragedies, and hardships, but there will also be joy and happiness in everyone’s life. However, in young age itself, many individuals end up starting a bad habit as a result of all their worries. Yes, apparently, smoking is the wrong choice in which numerous adults get addicted to in their young age.

Everyday, approximately around 1200 people die due to smoking. With every death, two healthy teens or young adults take smoking as their habit for the first time. If the current smoking trends continue, 5.6 million youths alive today will die prematurely.[1]

ABSTRACT

Background: Smoking is one of the leading causes of preventable death globally. Smoking generally has negative health effects because smoke inhalation inherently poses challenges to various physiologic processes such as respiration. Smoking is an unhealthy and dangerous habit which numerous adolescents are getting addicted to in their young lives. Hence, this survey was conducted to create awareness about the effect of smoking among adolescents. Aim: The aim of this survey is to create awareness about smoking in adolescents among rural areas. Materials and Method: The survey was undertaken among 200 adolescent school children of around 13–19 age groups of St. Claret Matriculation Higher secondary school, Thirumuravur, and informed concern was obtained from the participants. Of 200 students, 69 were willing to participate in the study. The survey instrument was a pre-prepared questionnaire eliciting information about the attitude and perception on smoke. The obtained responses were tabulated and analyzed. Result: From the survey, it is recorded that about 40.4% of the participants started smoking at the age of 13–15, which we call it as the initiation of the teenage. Majority of the adolescents start up with this habit because of the bad influences from their peers, family members, and also of curiosity and venturesomeness which take the individuals life into risk, making it difficult for them to quit smoking. Conclusion: Parental influences were a major factor leading to smoking behavior in the studied population. About 60% of the students are willing to quit the habit. Hence, d-addiction programs should be initiated among students to prevent further progression of smoking habits.

KEY WORDS: Adults, Cigarettes, Nicotine, Parental advices, Smoking, Teenagers, Tobacco

According to the research psychosocially, the smokers are more likely getting influenced by their peers and siblings to take up this habit. If one person gets started to smoke, then within a year, the nearby individual also gets stimulated to take up the habit.[2]

An additional risk factor influencing adults to smoke is stress. Moreover, youth who experiences highly stressful events throughout their childhood are more likely to get addicted to the smoking habit at the age of 14.[3]

High school and college are the initiative period for most of the chain smokers.[4] Smoking gives a wide relief to which the adults get addicted easily. Studies show that smoking will reduce the anxiety and it is also seen that smoking often takes place after any stressful event or in stressful situations.[5]

Smokers are likely to develop heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, and other lung diseases easily than the non-smokers.[6]

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Although cigarette smoking is the most common form of tobacco use around the world, there are yet other forms as well, such as using smokeless tobacco (including chew and snuff) and smoking a product other than a cigarette, such as a pipe, cigar, or bidi (tobacco wrapped in Tendu leaves), hookah.\[7\] Because for young people, the use of one form of tobacco has been associated with the use of other tobacco products, and it is particularly important to monitor all forms of tobacco use in this age group.

Although smoking is widely discouraged by public health professionals for its countless negative health consequence, nicotine may be an appetite suppressant. Nicotine could reduce appetite and influence an individual’s eating habits. A study on nicotine’s effects on appetite demonstrated that net effects of nicotine include elevated blood pressure, heart rate, and gastric motility while eliciting a sustained decrease in food intake. Autonomic, sensory, and enteric neurons each constitute potentially important loci for nicotine-mediated changes in feeding behavior.\[9\]

Moreover, when it comes as smoking among rural people, the health of people living in rural areas is impacted by tobacco use more so than those in urban and metropolitan areas, because of socioeconomic factors, culture, policies, and lack of proper healthcare.\[8\] Rural populations are majorly unaware of the consequences, have limited access to care, and have limited transportation options which pose barriers for rural residents to see their health provider on a regular basis.\[10\]

Above all, awarenesses and advices for the smokers are everywhere. All they need is self-control and responsibility toward their own life to quit this negative life sucking habit.\[11\] Beyond measures from the outside world, every smoker should carry the responsibility to know the negative impact of this life threatening act.\[12\] Once the drug-addicts learn and follow the advantages and disadvantages of smoking, they can see a new version of themselves by leading a happy life for them, their family, and the society.\[13\]

The aim of this survey is to create awareness about smoking in adolescents among rural areas.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey was taken up by 200 adolescent school children of 13–19 age group of St. Claret Matriculation Higher secondary school, Thiruninravur, and informed concerned was obtained from the participants. Of 200 students, 69 were willing to participate in the study. The survey instrument was a pre-prepared questionnaire eliciting information about the attitude and perception on smoke [Table 1]. The obtained responses were tabulated and analyzed.

RESULTS

Sixty-nine people were examined for the survey. Of which, 40.4% of the participants started smoking at their age of around 13–15, which we call it as the initiation of teenage [Figure 1], whereas the other 21.3% of the participants started their smoking habits at the age of 16–17 and the rest of the participants commenced their smoking at 18. From the above study, it is recorded that adolescents are getting easily attracted to all these bad habits in their young age itself, more because of bad influences from the family, from the tobacco advertisements, majority take up due to their peer pressure, teens also take up smoking to relax, stress, stay awake, or enjoy themselves, and they believe that smoking takes their maturity to the next level of adolescents considering this to be their freedom.

Many ex-smokers say that quitting was the most difficult thing that they ever came across. One of the main reasons for all the smokers, which make them addicted to drug, is nicotine. The chemical nicotine will make the smokers go wild, and after certain stages of their life, they will start craving for smoke and they grow feelings like without which it is difficult for them to survive. From the recent study, it is noted that 26.1% of the participants from the survey got addicted to smoke in 1 year (or) more than a year duration, whereas the other 37% got addicted to tobacco by around 6 months itself [Figure 2].

Hence, this it is assumed that participants who got addicted to smoking within 6 months gap must be chronic smokers, which is hard for them to quit smoking when compared to the ones who started late. Because as long as the individual get addicted to smoke, it is difficult for the person to manage their

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Responses of the questionnaires</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How old were you when you start smoking?</td>
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<td>2. How long was it before you felt addicted?</td>
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<td>3. How many cigarettes do you smoke in a day?</td>
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<td>4. Do you feel healthy as a teen?</td>
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<td>5. Does your parents and guardians advice you regarding smoking?</td>
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<td>6. Are you aware of the diseases due to smoking?</td>
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<td>7. Does the people you live with approve of your smoking?</td>
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<td>8. Do you wanted to quit or you content with the smoking?</td>
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![Figure 1: How old where you when you start smoking?](image-url)
lifestyle with it. Adolescents start smoking as a try, but unfortunately it ends up as a habit which fulfils their needs.

Smoking is well known because of its heart diseases, stroke, and cancer which decreases the life expectancy among all age individuals. These harmful effects of smoking among teenagers and young adults create an important call among their parents. Hence, from the participants who took part in survey, it is recorded that about 29 participants of 69 have experienced consequences from their family circle because of their smoking habits [Figure 3]. It is noted that advices from individual’s family is constantly given to make them stop smoking.

Surprisingly, majority of the participants know the dangers and consequences that they will be facing in future because of their smoking habit as an adolescent [Figure 4], yet they are not willing to quit smoking as it made the participant physically and mentally dependent on nicotine.

However, of this 69 participants, 60.9% of the participants have conveyed at the end of the awareness program that they are ready to quit smoking by following the easy preventive methods as their first step [Figure 5], which should be appreciated as a token of encouragement for their level of understanding and confidence.

**DISCUSSION**

When the current study was compared with the research of Myers’s, “cigarette smoking among adolescents with alcohol and other drug use problems,” it is observed that his study view on nicotine dependence among adolescents makes them forget the real world around them, which will further allow to take up the other bad habits additionally, which coincides with the current study.[14]

Moreover, the current survey is comparable with the study of Sang-hee Park’s, “Smoking and Adolescent Health,” it is noted that about majority of the participants from his survey was influenced to take up smoking habit from their peer influences, which correlates with the current study by around 50%.[15]

Viewed from the standpoint, it is recorded that people who take up smoking in their young ages are likely to develop heart diseases in their early living when compared with the ones who do not smoke or started smoking as their habit after their adolescents, and this was also proved by Johanne Harvey and Nicholas Chadi on their research on, “Preventing smoking in children and adolescents: Recommendations for practice and policy,” which correlates with the current study.[16]

Although there are several studies to record the smoking behavior among people who are residents of modern cities, only less number of researchers are only there to approach the smoking habits among people of rural areas.[17] We conducted this survey in St. Claret Matriculation Higher Secondary School of Thiruninravur, which is a small compacted village-like city with less number of family and poor facilities for their personal hygiene.
The study was conducted on a full working day in a school of a small rural area, where we arranged a camp of 15 people to interview the participants for survey. The school students were around the age group of 14–17 maximum and found some adolescents to be 18 as well as 19 too.[18]

The participants under age group of 13–15 were the maximum number of people who took this survey. It was an actual shock for their school teachers as well as their family circle. They conveyed that they started smoking in this young age itself more because of their wrong peer circle. They convey that they smoke around 2–3 cigarettes per day, which is an literal shock for their school to get to know this.[19]

When we recorded their school records, we came to know that maximum of the students’ records were lacking badly and they were poor in academics as well as their other activities too. Most of the participants’ reason for their smoking behaviour was because of their stress and influence from their bad family circle.[20]

These were the divergent and shocking events noted from the study, and at the end of the survey, proper awarenesses were given to the participants who are regular smokers as well as to the ones who do not smoke (or) non-smokers as an step of encouragement and prevention.

CONCLUSION

Hence, parents play a vital role in every adolescents’ life, and it is their responsibility to bring their child back again to a normal living rather than abusing them for the faults of taking up smoking. They should warn their children every now and then regarding the do’s and don’t accepted by the society, and it is also vital for every parent to inspect their kids’ friend circle and teach their teens regarding good and bad peers in every level of their growth.

As a growing society, we should stand united in not aiming our growing generation by smoking and abusing in front of them as it will influence them towards a bad lifestyle.

Above all, awareness and advice for the smokers are everywhere. All they need is self-control and responsibility toward their own life to quit smoking. Beyond measures from the outside world, every smoker should carry the responsibility to know the negative impact of this life threatening act. Once the drug-addicts learn and follow the advantages and disadvantages of smoking, they can see a new version of themselves by leading a happy life for them, their family, and the society.

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