

You!

THE NEW WOMAN & Lifestyle

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No Smoking

The affects of cigarette smoking are destructive and widespread.

However, smoking among young Pakistani girls and women is on the rise.

This week You! takes a look at this phenomenon



By
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The affects of smoking on human health are serious and in many cases, deadly. There are approximately 4000 chemicals in cigarettes, hundreds of which are toxic. The ingredients in cigarettes affect everything

from the internal functioning of organs to the efficiency of the body's immune system. Tobacco use is the second cause of death globally (after hypertension) and is responsible for killing 1 in 10 adults worldwide.

Women comprise 200 million of the world's more than 1 billion smokers. In the 53 countries belonging to the WHO European Region, 21% of all women smoke.

According to the WHO re-

port, tobacco use kills more than five million people every year, about 1.5 million of whom are women. Women smokers suffer the same consequences of smoking that men do such as, an increased risk of various cancers (lung, mouth, larynx, pharynx, oesophagus, kidney, pancreas, kidney, and bladder) and respiratory diseases. The affects of cigarette smoking are destructive and widespread. However, smoking among young Pakistani girls and

women is on the rise. As women we need explicit cognizance about the numerous smoking-related health risks which are uniquely ours. This week You! takes a look at this phenomenon

Why women smoke

Dr S. M. Faridi at Liaquat National Medical Center says, women are tricked into smoking at a younger age by appealing advertisements promising low nicotine and tar as well as weight loss.

The aggressive marketing glamorising smoking lures girls into puffing their lives away at a tender age. A perfect example would be of a certain company which links smoking with beauty and liberation.

Smoking is advertised as a pleasurable and 'cool' activity on shop-fronts and in youth magazines, TV drama serials also indirectly promote smoking.

In urban cities liberated women smoke openly in parties, restaurants even in offices and find no inhibition in smoking.

Pregnancy and smoking

Tobacco users pose serious risks to fetal and maternal health. Smoking during pregnancy causes a number of problems, including preterm delivery, low birth weight and sudden infant death syndrome. For the mother, smoking can lead to lung and other cancers, coronary heart disease, stroke, and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases.

This happens because chemicals in tobacco are passed from pregnant mothers through the blood stream to the fetus. These toxic chemicals present a serious risk to the unborn child, as well as the mother.

According to 'Our Bod-

making it toxic to sperm and causing difficulty in conceiving.

PID and smoking

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) take place with a 33 percent more frequency in smokers than in non-smokers. PID is a painful disease that requires immediate medical intervention and is often a contributing factor in ectopic pregnancies, as well as pelvic adhesions and other fertility problems.

Smoking also increases the risk of early menopause in women. Menstrual problems such as abnormal bleeding, amenorrhea (absence of periods), and vaginal discharges / infections are common complaints among women who smoke.

The young ones

Although every mother educates her child about this dreadful addiction, teenagers are still never the less, attracted towards smoking thinking this would make them seem 'cool', a term which a n y teenager would go through lengths to be tagged as.

According to a study carried out by the Aga Khan Uni-

Karachi girls with an average age of 15. Most girls admitted to smoking to keep a check on their weight.

The percentage of Pakistani teenage girls smokers is higher than that reported in some Indian cities as well as neighbouring countries such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh etc.

The ratio of girls smoking in schools has also risen dramatically. According to Professor Nadeem Rizvi, Head of Chest Diseases JPMC, Karachi, and President Pakistan Chest Society, smoking among school going girl has risen to 16%.

Apart from smoking, there has been an ongoing trend of 'shisha' (hooka) use.

responsibility of all vice chancellors of the universities to ensure that educational institutions are completely smoke-free zones," urges Dr. Shahina.

Professor Javaid Khan, official of National Alliance for Tobacco Control and Head Section of Chest Diseases at AKUH has said that in spite of repeated appeals by the medical community, the government has delayed the introduction of pictorial health warnings on cigarette packets in the country, apparently as a result of pressure from the powerful tobacco industry. According to Professor Javaid pictorial warnings would have a positive impact, especially on



At least 50% of university students in Karachi consume tobacco in this form, ignoring the fact that an hour of shisha use is equivalent to smoking 100 cigarettes.

How to prevent it

"City Governments of Karachi (CDG) needs to initiate an education campaign on tobacco and its hazards in schools and colleges," stresses Dr. Shahina, General Secretary of Pak-

the young. Professor Nadeem Rizvi also demands a complete ban on all forms of direct or indirect marketing of tobacco products. "How can we even allow promoting a product which is responsible for 100,000 deaths every year," laments Prof Rizvi.

WHO's efforts

Each year, WHO celebrates World No Tobacco Day on 31 May, highlighting

