

Original Article

Prevalence of smoking in various cities of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Our objective was to assess the prevalence of smoking in various cities of Pakistan

Methods: To assess the prevalence of smoking a questionnaire was used.

Results: Mean age of population studied was 47.62 ± 13.22 years. Prevalence of smoking was 56.3%. Higher socioeconomic status has positive effect on smoking habits and no effect of paternal smoking on offspring smoking habits.

Conclusion: A prevalence of 56.3 % was found. A positive and healthy thinking against smoking has been noted in masses of educated Pakistani people. (Rawal Med J 2005;30:)

Keywords: Smoking, socioeconomic status, paternal smoking

INTRODUCTION

Tobacco was first grown in North America. The word 'nicotine,' however, is of French origin, named after French Ambassador to Portugal Jean Nicot who was honored by the Queen of France when she was presented with a jeweled box containing snuff. Tobacco

use in Pakistan is not limited to cigarette smoking. Chillum, huqqah, chewing tobacco in pan, snuff and niswar are some other common forms of intake. Experts divide tobacco use into two broad categories - smoking and smokeless tobacco. Both uses of tobacco are very common in Pakistan, as established by a survey conducted by the PMRC in 1994.¹ Smoking is a pollution and injurious to health. More than 4,000 individual compounds have been identified in tobacco and tobacco smoke. Among these are about 60 compounds that are carcinogens, tumor initiators and tumor promoters. Some of these compounds are tar, carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide, phenols, ammonia, formaldehyde, benzene, nitrosamine, and nicotine.² In this study, our objective was to assess the prevalence of smoking in various cities of Pakistan.

METHODS

To assess the prevalence of smoking a cross sectional survey was conducted from April 2002 to December 2002, at Karachi, Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Kalarkahar. A questionnaire consisting of questions about socio-economic status, smoking and paternal smoking was used. An informed consent was obtained from all the subjects. Four hundred subjects were selected by convenient sampling. The data was analyzed and processed in SPSS version 10.0.

RESULTS

Mean age of population studied was 47.62 ± 13.22 years. Out of 400 subjects, 225 (56.3%) were smoker while 175 (43.8%) were nonsmokers (table 1).

Table 1. Prevalence of smoking

Smoking	Frequency	Percent
Yes	225	56.3
No	175	43.8
Total	400	100.0

Mean income of the subject was 9102 \pm 7208 pak rupees. Out of 225 smokers, 133 (59.11%) were having an income of more than Rs. 5000 (table 2). The results were statistically significant (p value=0.05) There was no effect of paternal smoking on offspring smoking habits (table 3). The results were statistically significant (p value=0.01)

DISCUSSION

One-third of the world's adult population are smokers (47% of these being men, 7% women) and each year, tobacco causes 3.5 million deaths, or about 10,000 deaths each day. It is predicted that in 20 years this yearly death rate from tobacco use will be more than 10 million people.³ Previous studies showed that 43.53% citizens of Karachi, 40.02% citizens of Multan and 33.00% citizens of Abbottabad were found to be indulged in smoking.² In our study, 56.3% were smokers which is quite high as compared to those figures.

Table 2. Relationship between smokers and their socioeconomic status

		socioeconomic status		Total	p value
		< Rs 5000	> Rs 5001		0.05
Do you smoke	Yes	92	133	225	
	No	57	118	175	
Total		149	251	400	

It is suggested that smokers should decide to quit the smoking once for all.² An estimated 50 million (25% of the population) Americans are smokers. About 20 million smokers try to break the habit every year, with only about a million actually managing to quit.

Another million become new smokers annually.⁴ Most surveys have shown that many diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, pulmonary and renal disorders and cancers are being diagnosed more in smokers or even those of quitting smoking than others have not been smoking at all. The prevalence of current smoking among men aged > 19 years was 18.8% in Iran⁵ this figure is much lower than ours.

Table 3. Effect of paternal smoking on offspring smoking habit

		Your father smoker		Total	p value
		Yes	No		0.01
Do you smoke	Yes	97	128	225	
	No	56	119	175	
Total		153	247	400	

In the US National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) study smoking was associated with lower socio-economic status,⁶ however, in our study smokers having income of more than Rs. 5000 are more in numbers (59.11%). In conclusion, although prevalence of smoking was high in our study, a positive, healthy thinking against smoking has been noted in masses of educated Pakistani people but still a lot should be thought and done at national level.

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