



Perception of Cigarette Smoking and Advertisement Among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan, Southwestern Nigeria.

la Perception de Fumer de Cigarette et l'Annonce Parmi les Etudiants d'Ecole Secondaires Supérieurs Dans Ibadan, Nigéria Sud-ouest.

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Cigarette smoking among youths is increasingly a public health concern.

OBJECTIVE: This study sought to determine the prevalence of smoking among secondary school students and to assess their perception of smoking and cigarette advertisement.

METHODS: A cross sectional study was conducted among 1,223 senior secondary school students in Ibadan, Southwest Nigeria.

RESULTS: The prevalence of smoking among this population was 41(3.4%) with 115(9.4%) reporting that they had ever smoked. Mean age of smoking initiation was 14.2 years. Smoking was greater among males than females and in higher secondary school classes. Only 700(57%) of students knew that smoking was harmful to their health and 477(39%) reported that they had been taught about the harmful effects of smoking in the school teaching programme. Twenty-six percent of students had an item with a cigarette brand name on it and 19% had been offered a free cigarette by a cigarette representative. One hundred and twenty-two (10%) of the students indicated that they will smoke when they leave school.

CONCLUSION: Although the prevalence of smoking among students was low, exposure to cigarette advertisements may encourage them to smoke. *WAJM* 2007; 26(3): 206 – 209.

Keywords: smoking, secondary school students, youths, attitudes, cigarette advertising.

RESUMÉ

Contexte: Fumer de Cigarette de Fond parmi les jeunesses est de plus en plus une inquiétude de santé publique.

Objectif: Cette étude a cherché à déterminer la prédominance de fumeurs parmi les étudiants d'école secondaires et évaluer leur perception d'annonce de fumer et cigarette.

Méthodes: Une croix étude en coupe a été dirigée parmi 1.223 étudiants d'école secondaires supérieurs dans Ibadan, Nigéria Sud-ouest.

Résultat. La prédominance de fumer parmi cette population était 41(3.4%) with 115(9 avec 115(9.4%) reporting that they reportage qu'ils jamais avaient fumé. L'âge moyen de fumer d'initiation était 14,2 années. Fumer était plus grand parmi les mâles que les femelles et dans les plus hautes classes d'école secondaires. Seulement 700(57%) d'étudiants a su que ce fumer était nuisible à leur santé et 477(39%) a rapporté qu'ils avaient été enseignés des effets nuisibles de fumer dans l'émission d'enseignement d'école. Vingt-six pourcent d'étudiants a eu un article avec un nom de marque de cigarette dessus et 19% avait été offert une cigarette libre par un représentant de cigarette. Cent et vingt-deux (10%) des étudiants indiqués qu'ils fumeront quand ils partent l'école.

Conclusion: Bien que la prédominance de fumer parmi les étudiants étaient bas, l'exposition aux annonces de cigarette peut les encourager à fumer. *WAJM* 2007; 26(3): 206 – 209.

Mots clés : fumant, les étudiants d'école secondaires, les jeunesses, les attitudes, la publicité de cigarette

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Abbreviations: SSS, Senior secondary school; WHO, World Health Organisation

INTRODUCTION

Cigarette smoking is an increasing public health concern especially in developing countries where aggressive cigarette marketing strategies are utilized to achieve increased consumption of the product. The cigarette smoking prevalence in the general population in Nigeria in 1989 was reported to be 9%¹. Several studies have focused on smoking habits of undergraduate students in Nigeria^{2,3} but there is very little current information on children of secondary school age when initiation usually begins.⁴ In spite of the knowledge of the harmful effects of tobacco consumption, the tobacco industry continues to thrive especially in developing countries where there is little restriction on advertisements and sales. Recently, a multi-national tobacco company cited its factory at Ibadan. Public health authorities are concerned that this will mean an increase in the burden of tobacco-related diseases within the next few decades. This study sought to determine the prevalence of smoking among secondary school students and to assess their perception about cigarette smoking and current advertisement of smoking.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Ibadan in the southwest of Nigeria is the second largest city in the country with a population of about 1.3 million at the 1991 census.⁵ Ibadan has few medium scale industries, a university, a polytechnic and several secondary schools.

A list of the 64 secondary schools in Ibadan was obtained from the Ministry of Education and seven schools were randomly selected for the survey. Permission to conduct the survey was requested from the school authorities and questionnaires were distributed to students in the three senior secondary school (SSS) classes. One arm of each class was randomly selected for study. The questionnaire was based on the WHO Global Youth Tobacco Survey questionnaire on smoking among youths⁶. It sought information on demographic characteristics of the students, their smoking habits, age at initiation, reasons for smoking, influence

of advertisement on smoking and attitudes to tobacco control policies. Questionnaires were self administered with instruction by research assistants together with the school teachers. Questionnaires were analysed using SPSS version 11 to identify factors associated with smoking and effects of tobacco advertisement on students' perception of smoking.

RESULTS

One thousand two hundred and twenty three students participated in the survey, 651(53%) males and 562(46%) females. Four hundred and five (33%) were in senior secondary class one (SS1), 448 (37%) in SS 2 and 350 (29%) in SS3 or final year of secondary education. Two thirds, 813 (66%) were Christians and 412 (33%) were Muslims. These and other socio-demographic data are summarised on Table 1.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Study Secondary School Students.

Characteristic	Number (%)
Age group in years	
12 – 15	386(31.5)
16–20	790(64.5)
21–25	16(1.0)
Distribution by sex	
Male	651 (53.2)
Female	572 (46.8)
Distribution by religion:	
Christian	812 (66.4)
Muslim	411 (33.6)
Distribution by class level	
Secondary school 1	404 (33)
Secondary school 2	446 (36.5)
Secondary school 3	338 (27.6)
No response	35 (2.9)
Distribution by living arrangements	
Living with parents	963 (78.7)
Living with guardians	245 (20)
Other	8 (0.7)
No response	7 (0.6)

Smoking habits and attitudes

One hundred and fifteen(9.4%) students had ever smoked cigarettes – 77 males and 38 females and 41 (3.4%) were current smokers; 35 (5.4%) males and 6 (1%) females. Current smoking was defined as having smoked on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey.

Smoking was greater among males

than females, among Muslims than Christians and among those living with their guardians vs living with parents ($p \leq 0.05$). There was no association between smoking and parents' educational status, $p > 0.05$. The frequency of smoking was highest in the SS3 or final year class with a prevalence of 5% as against, 2.9% in SS 2 and 2.4% in SS 1.

Mean age at initiation of smoking for this student population was 14.2 ± 5.7 (range 9 – 21). Among those who had ever smoked, the most important reason for smoking was loneliness 17(15%) and to cope with stress 14 (12%). Six (5%) reported that they smoked out of boredom. Parental smoking for both parents was reported by 10 (0.8%) students. Forty-six (3.7%) reported that their father smoked while 7 (0.6%) reported that their mothers smoked. One hundred and seventy (14%) students reported that their friends smoked. Smokers were likely to have friends who smoked $p = 0.000$. Two hundred and thirty (19%) thought that smoking made one more comfortable at social gatherings while 700 (57%) thought smoking made one feel less comfortable and 265 (22%) were indifferent.

Two hundred and sixteen (18%) thought smoking made boys look more attractive and 115 (9.5%) thought a man looked intelligent and successful when he smokes. On the other hand, 80 (6.6%) students thought a woman looked sophisticated when she smokes.

A little over half of the students, 699 (57%) thought that smoking was harmful to health and 593 (49%) thought that other people's cigarette smoke is harmful to their health. There was no difference in the answers given by smokers and non smokers, $p > 0.5$. Four hundred and seventy-seven (39%) students reported that they were taught about the hazards of smoking in the school teaching programme. Forty-six percent of SS 2 students, 45% of SS 3 students and 33% of SS 1 students had been taught about the hazards of smoking. Four hundred and seventy-seven (39%) were in favour of banning smoking in public places.

Thirty seven out of 41 smokers were willing to stop smoking at the time of the survey and 32 had tried to stop

smoking in the last one year. However, 122 (10%) of students thought they would smoke when they leave secondary school.

Cigarette Advertising

Nine hundred and fifty-six (78%) students reported that they had seen actors smoking when they watched television. Seven hundred and thirty-eight (60%) had seen cigarette brand names on television, 847(69.3%) had seen advertisements for cigarettes on billboards and 586 (48 %) had seen them in the print media in the last one month. Three hundred and eighteen (26%) had an item with a cigarette brand name on it and 237 (19%) said a cigarette representative had offered them a free cigarette.

DISCUSSION

The prevalence of smoking found among secondary school students in Ibadan is low at 3.4%. However, 9.4% of students had ever smoked. Few studies have been carried out in secondary schools in Nigeria. One study in Ilorin in 1988 reported a smoking prevalence of 4.4%⁷. A Global Youth Tobacco Survey conducted in Southeast Nigeria indicated a smoking prevalence of 18.1% among secondary school students⁸. This report showed a male smoking prevalence of 23.9% and 17.0% for females. Similarly, a study on female secondary school students in the same region reported a smoking prevalence of 7.7%⁹ compared to the smoking prevalence among females in this study of 1%. Similar variation of smoking rates within countries was noted by the collaborative group in the Global Youths Tobacco Survey¹⁰.

The prevalence of smoking among students in this study is low compared to figures reported in other African countries. Higher smoking rates for secondary school students were reported in Kenya¹¹ and South Africa¹². Still higher values have been reported in other parts of the world. Smoking prevalence among secondary school students in China was 15.9%¹³, Riyadh 13.2%¹⁴, Hungary 46%¹⁵ and 34.8% in the US.¹⁶

Smoking initiation in this

population was about 14 years of age. This is comparable to reports from Kenya¹¹ and South Africa¹². Smoking prevalence increased from first year in senior secondary to the final year. Other studies have shown increasing prevalence of smoking with age^{17, 18} and class¹⁹. As in other studies¹⁵, smoking was a predominantly male habit. More Muslim than Christian students smoked and those living with guardians were more likely to smoke. Very few parents smoked. The results show that the smoking habit among students in this study was not related to parental smoking. Up to two-thirds of students in this study reported seeing cigarette advertisements in the media and about one-sixth of them had personal items with a cigarette brand name on it. Nevertheless, over four fifths of students in this study were not convinced that smoking made boys or girls look more attractive or sophisticated. Only about a half of students in this study were aware of the harmful effects of smoking and passive smoking and less than half of them reported that they were taught about the harmful effects of smoking in a school teaching program. Only 39% of students were in favour of banning smoking from public places and 10% of them indicated that they will smoke when they leave school.

We conclude that although the prevalence of cigarette smoking among secondary school students was low, a moderately high exposure to cigarette advertising may encourage them to smoke.

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