

ORIGINAL ARTICLE**A STUDY ON AWARENESS OF TOBACCO USE AND CANCER RISK AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS****(Col) Prakash G Chitalkar¹, Rakesh Taran², Deepak Singla³, Prashant Kumbhaj³****Author's Affiliations:** ¹Professor; ²Associate Professor; ³Senior Resident, Department of Medical Oncology, Sri Aurobindo Institute of Medical Sciences, Indore, Madhya Pradesh**Correspondence:** Dr Prashant Kumbhaj Email: drprashantkumbhaj@yahoo.com**ABSTRACT**

Introduction: Tobacco use is a major health and social problem worldwide. Among the ill effects of tobacco use, the proportion of cancer in Male and female is 56.4% and 44.9%. Youth in general and adolescents in particular fall prey to this deadly habit with severe physical, psychological, and economic implications. Among the youth, students are particularly involved due to increasing academic pressures and life related stress

Objective: The objective of the study was to Estimate the Awareness on Use of Tobacco and cancer risk among medical students.

Material and methods: it was a Cross sectional study and was done in Sri Aurobindo Medical College. Prior permission was obtained from college authorities. Ethical Approval is obtained from the ethical committee of Sri Aurobindo institute of medical sciences. The study period was of 3 months duration i.e. from may 2015 - July 2015. 300 Under graduate medical students were selected for the study.

Results: Awareness about ill effect of tobacco was high. About 90% students were aware of role of smoking in causing oral and lung cancer, whereas only 60 % were aware of other cancers caused by smoking other than lung and oral. 80% students were aware of role of passive smoking in causing cancer. Reason for starting smoking was Influence of friends, parents and movies were 22%, 20%, 27% respectively. Surprisingly 31% students gave reason for exam and life related stress for their smoking. 97% tobacco users were male and 3 % were female. In females all were using smoking tobacco.

Conclusion: The awareness among medical students regarding harmful effects of tobacco use and its cancer risk was very high.

Key words: Tobacco use, smoking, medical students

INTRODUCTION

Tobacco use is a major health and social problem worldwide. Tobacco use kills nearly 6 million people each year and causes loss of hundreds of billions of dollars worldwide. Most of these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries¹. In India, around 10.9% use tobacco in one or the other form². Among the ill effects of tobacco use, the proportion of cancer in Male and female is 56.4% and 44.9% respectively.³ Youth in general and adolescents in particular fall prey to this deadly habit with severe physical, psychological, and economic implications.⁴ Among the youth, students are particularly involved due to increasing academic pressures and life related stress.⁵ Easy availability of tobacco in different forms, Encouragement from peer group and the lure of popularity make a teenager an easy prey.⁵

Objective: The objective of the study was to Estimate the Awareness on Use of Tobacco and cancer risk among medical students.

METHODOLOGY

It was a Cross sectional study and was done in Sri Aurobindo Medical College. Prior permission was obtained from college authorities. Ethical Approval is obtained from the ethical committee of Sri Aurobindo institute of medical sciences. The study period was of 3 months duration i.e. from may 2015 - July 2015. 300 Under graduate medical students were selected for the study. Students who were present on the day of interview were included in the study. The purpose of the study was explained to the students, confidentiality was ensured. The data were collected regarding age, sex, socioeconomic class, influencing factor for tobacco use, form of product used, their

knowledge about passive smoking and association of tobacco use and cancer.

Tobacco users were defined as having used tobacco at any stage in their life. Non user was Those who had not used tobacco products in any form even once in their lifetime. The data collected were compiled and analyzed.

RESULTS

In Table 1, age, sex and socioeconomic status wise distribution of the study population was shown: Majority (35%) of the study population was in the age group 19-20 years followed by 18-19 years (26%). In the study population, 53% were males and 47 % were females. Socio economic status: Based on Kuppuswamy's Classification, majority of the study population belonged to Middle class (60%).

Table 1: Demographic details of the study population

Variables	Factor	Numbers (%)
Age in Years	17-18	60(20.0)
	18-19	78(26.0)
	19-20	105(35.0)
	>20	57 (19.0)
Sex	Male	159(53.0)
	Female	141(47.0)
Socio economic status	Upper	60(20.0)
	Middle	180(60.0)
	Lower	60(20.0)

Table 2: Percentage of knowledge, Use and Reason for tobacco use

Variables	Numbers (%)
Knowledge on ill effects of tobacco use	
Oral cancer	270 (90.0)
Lung cancer	255(85.0)
Other cancers	180(60.0)
Passive smoking	240(80.0)
Use of tobacco in any form	
Smoking	60(20.0)
Smoking	51(85.0)
Chewing Tobacco	9(15.0)
Combined use	3(5.0)
Reason for tobacco use	
Friends	13(22.0)
Parents' smoking	12(20.0)
Movies	16(27.0)
Academic Stress	19(31.0)

Table 2 shows percentage wise distribution about knowledge, ill effects and influence of smoking. In the study population 20% students were using tobacco, 85% were using as smoking tobacco, 15% using as chewing tobacco and 5% populations using both smokeless and smoking tobacco. Awareness about ill effect of tobacco was high. About 90% students

were aware of role of smoking in causing oral and lung cancer, whereas only 60 % were aware of other cancers caused by smoking other than lung and oral. 80% students were aware of role of passive smoking in causing cancer. Reason for starting smoking was Influence of friends, parents and movies were 22%, 20%, 27% respectively. Surprisingly 31% students gave reason for exam and life related stress for their smoking. 97% tobacco users were male and 3 % were female. In females all were using smoking tobacco.

DISCUSSION

The prevalence of tobacco use in this study was 20%. The studies conducted among undergraduate medical students in different parts of India reported the prevalence of tobacco consumption ranging from 8.7% to 50.7%.⁶⁻¹⁷ The cultural & geographical factors may be the reason for such a wide variation. The cigarette smoking was most common form of tobacco use in the present study, this is also shown by study done by Selokar et al.¹⁷ In this study, cause for initiating tobacco use was mainly academic stress (31%), followed by movies (27%) which is also shown by Sargent JD et al¹⁹ in their study, while in studies done by Ganesh et al⁸, Aggarwal et al¹⁰, Kumari et al¹¹, Basu et al¹², Sharma et al¹³ and Selokar et al¹⁷ the peer pressure was observed to be the main cause for initiation.

Among tobacco users about 20 % medical student's tobacco consumption habit was affected by parental tobacco use. Studies done by Ramakrishna et al⁷, Ganesh et al⁸, Kumari et al¹¹ and Basu et al¹² shows the similar findings. The tobacco consumption among female students was lower to that of male in our study. This was statistically significant and the similar findings have been shown by Ramakrishna et al⁶, Chatterjee et al⁷, Basu et al¹² and Thankappan et al¹⁶. In the present study high level of awareness (90%) about the adverse effect of tobacco consumption is comparable to the studies done by Khan et al⁹ in Bareilly (89.53%) and Sharma et al¹³ in Dehradun (91.8%).

The study of Sreeramareddy et al¹⁸ among the medical students of five Asian countries including India, reported that prevalence of smoking among males was higher than females in all countries which were statistically significant. About 80 percent of individuals who start smoking during adolescence will continue to smoke in adulthood, and one third of these individuals will die prematurely due to smoking related disease²⁰. So we should make a strategy to limit youth access to tobacco products by making smoke free air laws and state, by enforcing age restrictions for sales, increasing Taxes and cost of tobacco products, Restrictions on flavored tobacco products.

LIMITATIONS

There might be possibility that some tobacco users did not disclose about tobacco use despite of being ensuring about their confidentiality, so the prevalence of tobacco users observed in our study may not give the correct picture.

CONCLUSION

The awareness among medical students regarding harmful effects of tobacco use was very high. Most common reason behind tobacco use among medical students is academic pressure followed by influence of movies.

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