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Smoking Behavior among Bangladeshi Young Adults: Insights from a Smoking Survey of University Students in Dhaka City

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ABSTRACT

Background: Smoking has become an important public health issue in recent years, but little is known about how smokers position themselves and regulate their behavior in this context.

Objective: The study was aimed to investigate the trends of cigarette smoking & the concomitant perception of young adults towards it.

Methods: A prospective cross sectional study was carried out at renowned 5 universities of Dhaka city. Around 250 students filled-out the questionnaires based on cigarette smoking and were evaluated in between July, 2015 to December, 2015.

Results: This survey has been shown that most of the smokers are male and the number of female smoker is also increasing. We also learnt different kinds of people's perception regarding smoking. Moreover, we identified that although maximum participants knew that smoking can cause cancer and chronic respiratory diseases, they continued smoking. From the survey we have come to understand that, day by day the number of smokers has been increasing rapidly. To quit smoking is quite impossible to the young smokers.

Conclusion: Our awareness can show them a light of life. For this, we need to come forward and help them to quit smoking. Media advertising, campaigning, social awareness, education etc. can help us to prevent smoking.

Key Words: Smoking, Harmful, Young adults, Attitudes, Regulation, Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades several study results have suggested that smoking prevalence among young adults has increased significantly¹. Targeting young adults by tobacco industries is the main reason of increasing young smokers. Much of their marketing occurs by targeting college and university students². The longevity of tobacco smoking is severely detrimental to human health which is well known to us because of several articles published earlier on this topic³⁻⁵. Several studies have also shown the relationship between tobacco smoking and the development of diseases. Among the observed diseases most notable are heart disease, respiratory or lungs disease, renal disease and various types of cancer⁶⁻¹⁰. According to the study of WHO one billion people will die

in 21st century due to the diseases associated with tobacco because it causes some deleterious non-communicable diseases¹¹. In addition to smoking, passive smoking is also responsible for causing diseases, disability and even death¹².

The best way to prevent the harmful effects of smoking is quitting it. Smokers who gained mental benefit from smoking, as in some cases finding it helpful to regulate or improve concentration, are less successful of quitting smoking¹³. On the other hand who believes smoking is harmful for health and for everyday life will be more motivated to quit smoking¹⁴. The intention of our study was to identify common causes and factor of smoking and believes of smokers. After identifying common factors, preventive measures were also evaluated to benefit the society. A better solution to stop

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smoking is creating public awareness by advertising harmful effects of smoking.

METHODOLOGY

This prospective cross sectional study was done with 250 university students from July, 2015 to December, 2015. The investigation was carried out in some renowned university of Dhaka city. For the purpose of this study a standard questionnaire was formed to evaluate various parameters like socio-demographic data of participants, attitude towards smoking, reasons behind starting smoking, and harmful effects of smoking and possible measures to stop and prevent smoking. During interview several inclusion factors were considered which are given below:

- Only university students participated
- Both male and female participants
- University students who are living in Dhaka city
- Both smokers and non-smokers

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio Demographic Data

In this survey it was clearly seen that most of the young people were cigarette smoker and we have found 62.80% smoker and 19.20% non-smoker among our survey population. It was also observed that most of the cigarette smokers were male (72.40%) and a few amount of cigarette smokers were female (8.80%). Among the smokers, maximum of our participants were living in hostel (58.06%) rather than with parents and other family members. In case of starting to smoke, we have found that 75.48% of smokers started to smoke in their college life. This survey found that smokers were more comfortable to smoke at local parks/reserves, university, sports field & outdoor seating areas of cafes.

Smoking Frequency

Smoker participants were asked about their smoking frequency. And our study has shown (table 1) that most of the cigarette smokers (33.99%) smoke 7-10 times per day which is very alarming.

Table 1: Frequency of smoking.

Frequency	Number of smokers (Percentage)
1-3 times	16(10.46)
4-6 times	45(29.41)
7-10 times	52(33.99)
Unlimited	40(26.14)

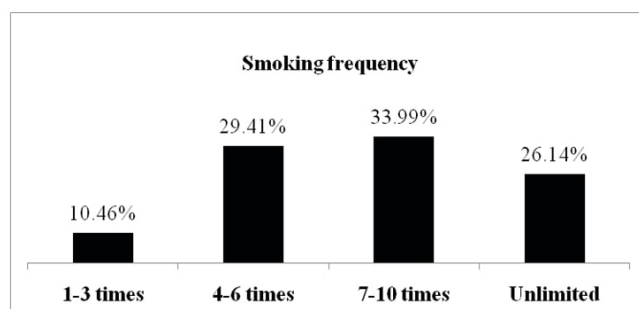


Figure 1: Smoking frequency.

Common attitudes towards smoking

In these survey we found (table 2) that smokers thought that they are popular, tough looking, grown up people due to their smoking habit. They also claimed that they find smoking enjoyable, relaxing and tension releasing matter.

Table 2: Common attitudes of smokers towards smoking.

Common parameters of attitudes	Percentage of respondents
Smoking is Enjoyable	77.83%
Smokers are popular	74.38%
Smokers are tough	71.92%
Smokers look grown up	65.02%
No harm to smoke once in a while	66.01%
Smoking helps to relax	65.52%
Smoking helps to forget worries	79.31%
Smokers are often stressed	56.16%

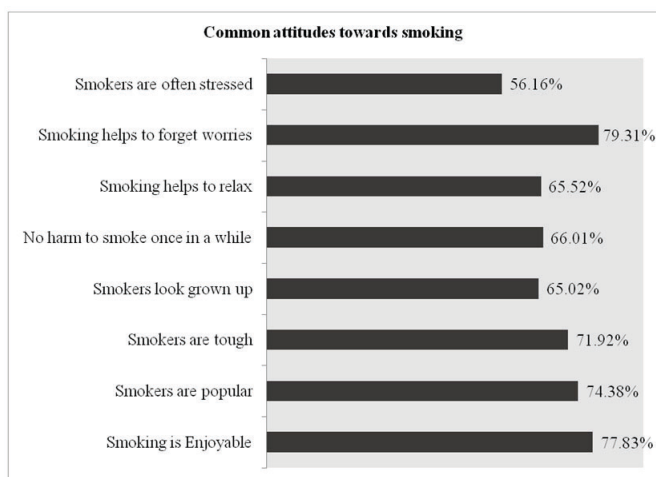


Figure 2: Common attitudes of smokers towards smoking.

Regulation of smoking

This survey asked people about regulation of smoking and people expressed their opinion based on standard questionnaire which is shown in table 3. Maximum of the participants (75.37%) agreed that anti-smoking information should be highlighted to the common people.

Table 3: Approach to regulate smoking

Regulatory approach to control smoking	Percentage of participants
Smoking should be banned	43.84%
Cigarettes should sell at fewer places	38.92%
Cigarettes should not promote in cool packs	25.12%
Cigarettes should be costly	37.93%
Anti-smoking info should highlight	75.37%

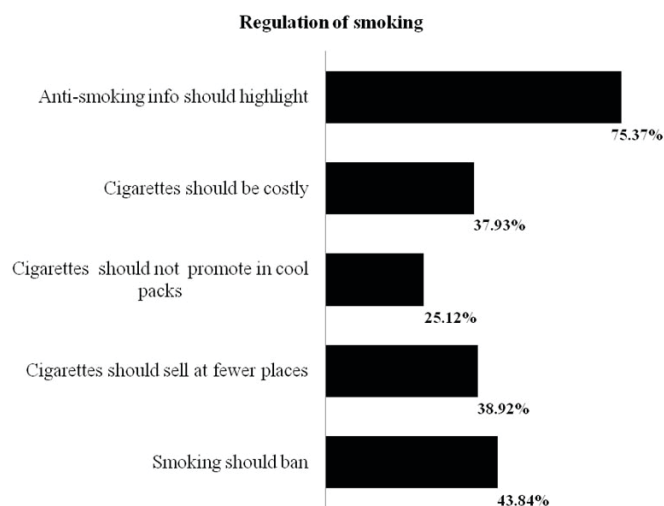


Figure 3: Approach to regulate smoking.

Knowledge of smoking related problems

This survey questioned about harmful effects of smoking. We found it astonishing that maximum of the participants were known to the harmful effects of smoking like, smoking causes cancer, damages lungs, create breathing problems and so on.

Table 4: Knowledge about harmful effects of smoking.

Knowledge about smoking	Percentage of participants
Smoking is harmful to health	89.03%
Second hand smoking is also harmful	96.13%
Smoking causes breathing problem	91.61%
Smoking affects the lung	92.90%
Smoking causes cancer	95.48%

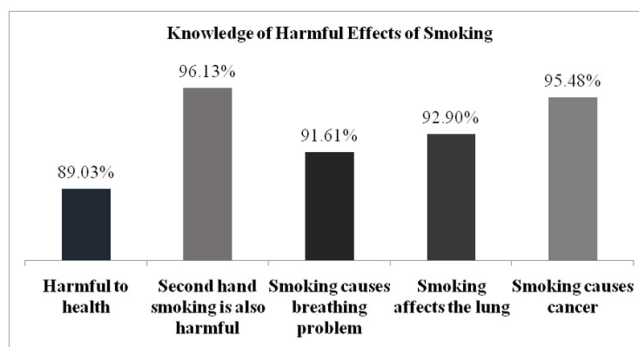


Figure 4: Knowledge of harmful effects of smoking.

CONCLUSION

Smoking itself is like a disease to mankind due to its widespread harmful effects. In our study we found that people tend to smoke ignoring its harmful effects. It was shocking to see that majority of the participants in our study were smokers. Nowadays smokers are everywhere in all social classes and gender. To regulate smoking we need to establish smoke-free environment policies; increase the price of tobacco products; applying comprehensive laws to regulate and enforce bans on sales, purchases, and consumption of tobacco products by underage youth; and impose regulations on content, labeling, promotion, and advertising of tobacco products. And it is also essential to target mass media campaigns to create massive awareness among children, young adults as well as parents to make a better world for mankind and for the environment too.

Conflict of Interests

None declared.

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