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Prevalence of Cigarette Smoking among Teenagers in Beruwala Educational Division in Sri Lanka

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Background: Tobacco usage and exposure to tobacco smoke have serious impacts on human health. Although it is most preventable cause of death in the world today, nearly 4 million people die annually from tobacco related causes. In Sri Lanka, prevalence of cigarette smoking among 13-15 years age group was 5.7% and in global, prevalence of cigarette smoking among 16-19 age group was 17.1%.

Objectives: To assess the prevalence of cigarette smoking among teenagers in Beruwala educational division

Methods: A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted among 640 students of 13-19 years old at randomly selected schools in 1AB category in Beruwala educational division. A pre tested, self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Chi-square test was used to assess the associations between the prevalence of smoking and factors that influence the teenagers to smoke.

Results: The responsive rate was 100%. Study population was consisted of 50% of male and 50% of female students. Among them, 200 (31.25%) students were in 13-15 age category and 440 (68.75%) students in 16-19 age category. There were 53 (8%) students who were ever smokers, among them, 3 (0.5%) female and 42 (6.32%) male students were found in 16-19 years age group and 1 (0.02%) female and 7 (0.11%) male students were found in 13-15 years age group. Out of ever smokers, 21 (3.3%) of them had smoked cigarettes during last 6 months and they are currently smoking and all of them were male students in 16-19 years age category. All of the female students (n = 4, 100%) and majority of male students (n = 42, 85.71%) who had smoked at least once, have smoked to get the experience of cigarette smoking. Cigarette smoking behaviour associated with gender ($p <0.001$, df = 1), age ($p = 0.005$, df = 1), family income level ($p = 0.029$, df = 1) and ethnicity ($p = 0.315$, df = 1).

Conclusions: The prevalence of smoking was relatively high among 16-19 age category. All of the current smokers were found in 16-19 category and were males. Smoking behavior was significantly associated with gender, age and family income level among teenagers in Beruwala Educational Division.

Keywords: Cigarettes smoking, Prevalence, Teenage smokers