

TITLE: Assessment of cigarette smoking pattern and sources of negative influences that drive it among students of the University of Abuja, Nigeria.

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BACKGROUND

Despite the well documented hazards associated with cigarette smoking ¹, the prevalence of smoking continues to increase especially among the younger age groups in developing countries ². There is a need to determine factors responsible for this trend and to review present effort at prevention of tobacco associated cancers. Youths are strategic in cancer control effort therefore appropriately delivered information about cancer prevention to this group can result in good attitude and behaviour changes which will reduce the prevalence of cigarette smoking.

OBJECTIVES The study was set up to determine the pattern of cigarette smoking among youths and the exposure factors that negatively affect their decision regarding smoking.

METHODS Pre-tested, self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data on sociodemographic features, sources of information about health issues and the media houses that the youths favour by multistage sampling technique. Assessment of exposure to cigarette advert was also made. Data was analyzed using SPSS computer software programme.

RESULTS The study revealed that the students were exposed to negative influences that encourage smoking, thus it is not surprising that one-third of them are smokers and had little or no exposure to smoking prevention interventions such as lectures (33% had never had any form of lecture against smoking). Thus only 21% believed they are at any risk of developing cancer as a result of smoking. The influences they had been through radio, television, billboards, movies (Nollywood), and very importantly the university staff and fellow students that smoke in the presence of the students.

CONCLUSION

One-third of the students smoke cigarettes. There is constant exposure of the youths to cigarette advertisement in the media, at home, school and on the streets. Unless the negative influence is removed or reduced, very little could be achieved in the fight against smoking and cancer prevention efforts in the university campus.

REFERENCE

- 1 www.deathsfromsmoking.net
- 2 2. Townsend L, Flisher AJ, Gilreath T, King G: A systematic review of tobacco use among sub-Saharan Africa youth. *Journal of Substance Use* 2006, **11**(4):245-269.