ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Study on prevalence of cigarette smoking among a sample of students of technical institute of Babylon

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Abstract

Objective: To determine the prevalence of smoking among students, and to identify the reasons for smoking.

Method: The cross-sectional, descriptive and analytical study was conducted from April 1 to May 9, 2019, at the Technical Institute, Al-Furat University, Babylon, Iraq, and comprised students of either gender who were selected randomly. Data was collected through structured interviews using a questionnaire. Data was analysed using SPSS 24.

Results: Of the 147 subjects, 115(78.2%) were males and 32(21.8%) females. The largest age group was 19-28 years 125(85%), and 115(78.2%) hailed from rural areas. There were 78(53%) smokers; 73(63.5%) from among males and 5(15.6%) from among females. The most cited reason for smoking was feeling of enjoyment 40%. Smoking was significantly associated with age, gender as well as level and type of education ($p<0.05$). The association of friends and family with the smoking habit was significant ($p<0.05$). Among the smokers, 72(92.3%) were aware of the harmful effects of the habit ($p<0.05$).

Conclusion: Cigarette smoking was found to be widespread among the students.

Keywords: Smoking, Family, Tobacco, Habits, Masculinity, Students, Smokers. **DOI: .....**

Introduction

Unfortunately, smoking is increasing in almost all developing countries. Cigarette smoking continues to pose a serious public health threat, killing about 6 million people each year and adding to the burden on healthcare systems and societies.[1] There is close association between cigarette smoking and most health problems in the form of early onset of deceases.[2-4] While cigarette smoking has decreased in the developed world, it is increasing elsewhere at a rate of 3.4% per years.[5] According to a report by the World Health Organisation (WHO), smoking is the biggest cause of preventable deaths worldwide, with an expected 1 billion smoking-related deaths reported by the end of the 21st century, and 10 million deaths annually feared by 2030. Anti-smoking programmes are of great importance in WHO strategies because smoking has a very serious impact on public health.[6,7] Several attempts have been made to develop guidelines on smoking cessation through the participation the primary healthcare with smoking cessation services.[8] In colleges, cigarette smoking has become an important public health issue.[9] In recent years, the prevalence of smoking by university students has increased during the 2000s in developing countries such as Iraq, but it has since levelled off and has seen a continuous and steady decline especially in high-income countries. Health education about the dangers of cigarette smoking is one of the most important reasons for this decline.[4,10]

The current study was planned to determine the prevalence of smoking among students, to identify the relationship between cigarette smoking and socio-demographic factors, and reasons for smoking.

Subjects and Methods

The cross-sectional, descriptive and analytical study was conducted from April 1 to May 9, 2019, at the Technical Institute, Al-Furat University, Babylon, Babil Governorate, Iraq. After approval from the institutional ethics review committee, the sample was raised using simple random sampling technique. Those included were first and second grade students of either gender. Those not willing to participate were excluded.

After taking informed consent from all the subjects, data was collected using a predesigned questionnaire in Arabic, the local language, that was filled during face-to-face interviews. The first part of the questionnaire related to sociodemographic characteristics, like age, gender, area of residence, educational level, type of education and economic status. The second part included questions related to smoking habit, reasons and knowledge about its harmful effects.

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Data was analysed using SPSS 24. Data was expressed in frequencies and percentages. P<0.05 was considered significant.

Results

Among the 147 subjects, the largest age group was 19-28 years 125(85%) (Table 1), 115(78.2%) were males and 32(21.8%) were females (Table 2). There were 78(53%) smokers (Figure 1); 73(63.5%) from among male subjects and 5(15.6%) from among the female subjects. There were 115(78.2%) subjects with a rural background (Table 3), while education level and type were also noted (Tables 4-5). The most cited reason for smoking was feeling of enjoyment 40% (Figure 2).

Smoking was significantly associated with age, gender as well as level and type of education level and type (p<0.05). The association of friends and family with the smoking

Table-1: The distribution of study sample according to age

Variable		Smoking			
		Yes (smoker) n (%)	No (non-smoker) n (%)	Total n (%)	*p*- value*
Age	Age ≤18 (Years)	4 (5.1)	2 (2.9)	6 (4.1)	0.198**
	19-29 (Years)	68 (87.2)	57 (82.6)	125 (85.0)	
	30≥(Years)	6 (7.7)	10 (14.5)	16 (10.9)	

* p-value calculator after inducing Age ≤18 (Years) and 19-29 (Years) into one.
** Fisher exact test

Table-2: The distribution of study sample according to gender

Variable		Smoking			
		Yes	No	Total	*p*- value*
Gender	Male	73	42	115	0.000
		93.6%	60.9%	78.2%	
	Female	5	27	32	
		6.4%	39.1%	21.8%	

Table-3: The distribution of study sample according to level of education

Variable		Smoking			
		Yes	No	Total	*p*- value*
Residence	Urban	16	16	32	0.423*
		20.5%	23.2%	21.8%	
	Rural	62	53	115	
		79.5%	76.8%	78.2%	

* Fisher exact test

Table-4: The distribution of study sample according to level of education

Variable		Smoking			
		Yes	No	Total	*p*- value*
Level of education	First stage	4	1	5	0.003*
		5.1%	1.4%	3.4%	
	Second stage	74	68	142	
		94.9%	98.6%	96.6%	

* Fisher exact test

Table-5: The distribution of study sample according to type of education

Variable		Smoking			
		Yes	No	Total	*p*- value*
Type of education	Medical	20	34	54	0.003
		25.6%	49.3%	36.7%	
	Non-medical	58	35	93	
		74.4%	50.7%	63.3%	

* Fisher exact test

Table-6: Distribution of the studied sample according to the impact of smokers on their friends.

Variable		Smoking			
		Yes	No	Total	*p*- value*
Have smoker friends	Yes	66	34	100	0.000
		84.6%	49.3%	68.0%	
	No	12	35	47	
		15.4%	50.7%	32.0%	

Table-7: Distribution of the studied sample according to the impact of smokers on their family members.

Variable		Smoking			
		Yes	No	Total	*p*- value*
Have smoker family members	Yes	44	53	97	0.007
		56.4%	76.8%	66.0%	
	No	34	16	50	
		43.6%	23.2%	34.0%	

Table-8: knowledge of the studied sample regarding the harmful effects of smoking.

Variable		Smoking			
		Yes	No	Total	*p*- value*
Do you know the harmful effects of smoking	Yes	72	39	111	0.000
	92.3%	56.5%	75.5%		
		No	6	30	36
		7.7%	43.5%	24.5%	

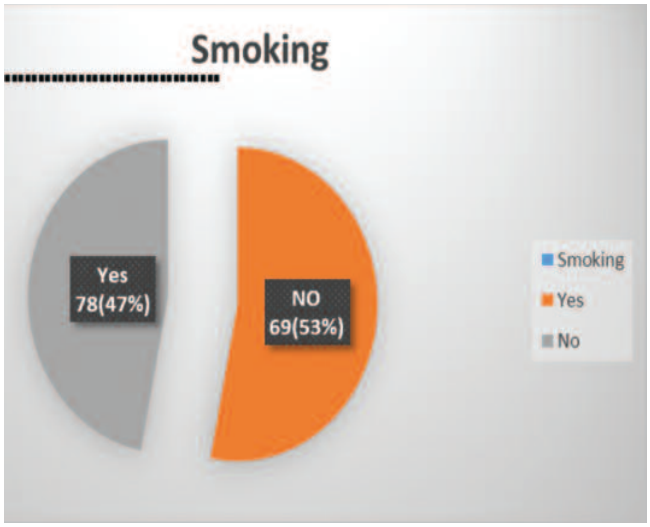

Figure 1: The distribution of study sample according to smokers and non-

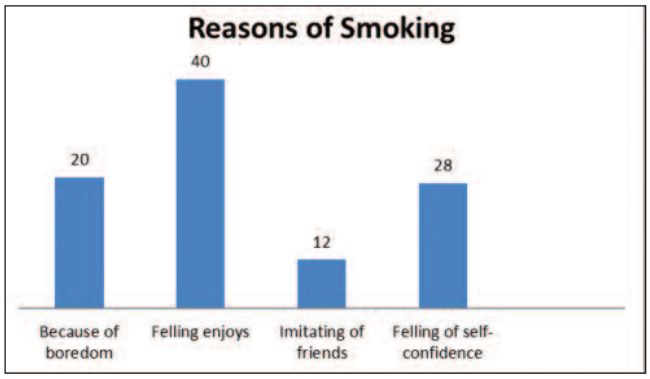

Figure 2: Distribution of the studied sample according to reasons for smoking.

habit was significant (p<0.05) (Tables 6-7). Among the smokers, 72(92.3%) were aware of the harmful effects of the habit (p<0.05) (Table 8).

Discussion

Although the harms of smoking are well known, it is still common among college students. In the current study, 53% of subjects were smokers, which was consistent with a study done in Lebanon.[11]

Age was significantly associated with smoking in the current study, which is probably because boys growing up tend to have the desire to highlight their masculinity.

Most of the smokers in the current study were studying management, law and engineering, while students in medical or allied departments were less likely to smoke, which was consistent with earlier studies.[12,11]

The influence of friends and family members on smoking habit was confirmed in the current study, as most smokers acquired the habit in the company of a friend 66(85%) or a family member 44(56%). This has been reported by studies done in other countries as well.[13-15]

The most common reason given by the students for smoking were their perceived feeling of enjoyment and expression of masculinity. Another reason cited was pleasure and relief from the pressures of life and boredom. This finding was supported by earlier reports.[16] Regarding smokers' knowledge of the harmful effects of smoking, most of the students were aware of the association of smoking with various diseases. The knowledge of first-year students of medicine or allied disciplines related to smoking-related diseases was very poor 4(5.1%). This was consistent with a study done in Sudan.[13]

Conclusion

Cigarette smoking was found to be widespread among the students.

Limitations: The current study has limitations as the sample size was not calculated due to time constraints. All students were present during the study and were allowed to participate**.**

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