

Οι στάσεις των Ελλήνων μαθητών ως προς το κάπνισμα και την καπνισματική δραστηριότητα

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Εισαγωγή: Ο συνεχώς αυξανόμενος αριθμός των εφήβων καπνιστών, αποτελεί ένα παγκόσμιο πολυπαραγοντικό πρόβλημα με άμεσες υγειονομικές, οικονομικές, κοινωνικές και πολιτιστικές προεκτάσεις. Οι στάσεις των νέων απέναντι στο κάπνισμα διαμορφώνονται από το σύγχρονο τρόπο ζωής, την κοινωνικοοικονομική κατάσταση και το περιβάλλον διαβίωσης των εφήβων.

Σκοπός: Σκοπός της παρούσας μελέτης ήταν να προσδιοριστεί ο επιπολασμός του καπνίσματος σε εφήβους, ηλικίας 13-18 ετών, να διερευνηθεί η στάση τους απέναντι στο κάπνισμα και να καθοριστεί η συμβολή των κοινωνικών επιρροών στην εμφάνιση και συνέχιση του καπνίσματος.

Υλικό και Μέθοδος: Το δείγμα της μελέτης (n=873) αποτελείτο από μαθητές Γυμνασίων και Λυκείων δύο πόλεων της κεντρικής Ελλάδος. Η συλλογή των δεδομένων πραγματοποιήθηκε κατά το χρονικό διάστημα 01/10/2011-25/02/2012. Το επίπεδο στατιστικής σημαντικότητας τέθηκε στο $p=0.05$. Για την ανάλυση των δεδομένων χρησιμοποιήθηκε το στατιστικό πακέτο SPSS 17.0 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA).

Αποτελέσματα: Η στάση των νέων του δείγματος απέναντι στο κάπνισμα εμφανίζεται θετική. Οι νέοι πιστεύουν ότι όσοι καπνίζουν είναι σύγχρονοι και πιο κοντά στις νέες κοινωνικές τάσεις, ενώ θεωρούν φυσιολογικό να καπνίζουν οι συνομήλικοί τους. Επίσης θετική εμφανίζεται, η στάση των μαθητών απέναντι στα ενήλικα άτομα που καπνίζουν, ενώ δεκτική παρουσιάζεται και η εικόνα των μαθητών για τα ελαφρά τσιγάρα. Το μοντέλο γραμμικής παλινδρόμησης για την πρόβλεψη της στάσης απέναντι στο κάπνισμα, εμφανίζει αρνητική συσχέτιση μεταξύ ηλικίας και στάσης απέναντι στο κάπνισμα (τα νεαρότερα άτομα είχαν περισσότερο θετική στάση απέναντι στο κάπνισμα).

Συμπεράσματα: Από την παρούσα μελέτη, προκύπτει μια θετική στάση των εφήβων απέναντι στο κάπνισμα και την καπνισματική συνήθεια. Οι νέοι στην πλειοψηφία τους θεωρούν το κάπνισμα ως μια φυσιολογική δραστηριότητα που τυγχάνει αυξημένης ευρύτερης αποδοχής.

Λέξεις Κλειδιά: Κάπνισμα, εφηβεία, στάσεις, οικογένεια.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Greek students' attitudes toward smoking and smoking activity

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The increasing number of teen smokers is a global multi-factorial problem with health, economic, social and cultural influences. The attitudes of young people about smoking and smoking habit are shaped by the modern lifestyle, socio-economic status and living environment during of adolescent period.

Aim: The aim of the present study was to determine the prevalence of smoking in adolescents, aged 13-18 years old, to investigate their attitudes towards smoking and determine the contribution of social influences to onset and continuation of smoking.

Material and Method: The studied sample consisted of 873 students of senior high school and high school, from two



cities of Central Greece. The data collected by using an anonymous self – reported questionnaire during the period 01/10/2011 – 25/02/2012. The level of statistical significance was set at $P = 0.05$. Data analysis was performed by the SPSS 17.0 statistical package (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA).

Results: The attitudes of the sample towards smoking appear positive. Young people believe that the teenager who smokes are modern, closer to fashion, and consider it normal to smoke to their peers. Young people have positive attitude in adults smoking and also in light cigarettes. The linear regression model for predicting the attitudes towards smoking shows a negative correlation between age and attitudes to smoking (the younger people had more positive attitudes towards smoking).

Conclusion: The present study showed a positive attitude of teenagers in smoking and smoking habit. Young people mostly believe that smoking is a normal activity that enjoys young people and also it acceptance.

Keywords: Smoking, adolescent, attitude, family.

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INTRODUCTION

Smoking in adolescence is a serious public health and problem in both developed and developing countries. The increasing number of teen smokers is a global multifactorial problem with health, economic, social and cultural influences. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 9.5% of adolescents make systematic use of tobacco.¹

Globally, the average age of beginning adolescents the smoking activity occurs at the age of 10 years, but most teenagers become regular smokers at the age of 13-15 years.¹⁻³

The prevalence of smoking is determined by age, social environment and from the philosophy of the same teenager about smoking. Estimated that 40% of teenagers had tried to smoking before the age of 10 years, about the 80% of smokers consume an average of five cigarettes daily and finally the 30% of young people who not smoking are likely to smoke the following year.²⁻⁴

Teenagers prefer to smoke with their friends in social events such as dinners, musical events, nightclubs and less in friends' houses or in public places. They buy tobacco products from their respective tobacco stores and usually select the most commercial and advertising brands. The majority of children thinks that it easy to quit smoking and probably will stop smoking in the future.⁵⁻⁶

The attitudes towards smoking are related by the modern lifestyle, socio-economic status and family environment of adolescents. The majority of young people believe that smoking make more friends, helps in weight loss and stay slim, relax from stress and be more socially acceptable.⁷⁻⁸

The smoking in adolescent and the use legal or illegal tobacco products increase year by year. Reducing the incidence of smoking and protecting the health of adolescents it requires the participation and cooperation of government, health professionals, teachers and family.^{2,4,9-10}

AIM

The aim of the study was to determine the prevalence of smoking in adolescents, aged 13–18 years old, to investigate their attitudes towards smoking and determine the contribution of social influences to onset and continuation of smoking.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In the present study the quantitative approach, which involved the collection of quantitative data through the method of public research, was followed by a questionnaire as a tool. The choice of schools was done in a random and layered way. The studied sample consisted of 873 students of senior high school and high school, from two cities of Central Greece (Lamia and Larisa). The data collected by using an anonymous self – reported questionnaire during the period 01/10/2011 – 25/02/2012. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, there was a review of existing international literature, as is registered in international databases MEDLINE, EMBASE and CINAHL. After a thorough critical reading of the bibliography, no scale was found to assess attitudes of students to smoking. For this reason it was considered appropriate to develop and pilot scale in the Greek.¹¹ The self-report questionnaire used in this research included questions on participants' demographics,

smoking habits, knowledge and attitudes towards smoking, peers' and family's smoking habits and antismoking socialization. The attitude scale (Likert- type scale) includes 11 questions and takes 0 to 3 values. The potential values in the attitude towards smoking scale range from 0, which represent negative attitude to smoking, to 33 which represent positive attitude. The questions were encoded in a way that the higher values would represent a higher susceptibility towards smoking. Cronbach's α for attitude scale were 0.61.

Out of the 1000 questionnaires distributed, 873 of them were completed and returned (respond rate = 87%). The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board no. 5820/17-12-2009 and Ministry of Health no. 149051/Γ2/25-11-2010 decisions.

Statistical analysis

A descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was performed. After the univariate analysis logarithmic regression analysis was applied to the extent of social influence and attitude towards smoking. In the model, variables were statistically associated with staging and univariate analysis. Average values (mean) and standard deviations (SD) were used to describe the quantitative variables. Absolute (N) and relative (%) frequencies were used to describe the qualitative variables. Pearson's χ^2 test, with



Yates' sequential correction for quadruped tables, was compared. For the comparison of the quantitative variables between two groups Student's t-test was used, while for three or more groups an ANOVA variance analysis was performed.

After the univariate analysis, we applied a linear prediction model on the extent of attitude towards smoking. The model integrated the variables which were correlated statistically significantly, in the univariate analysis, with attitudes. The level of statistical significance was set at $P = 0.05$. The SPSS 17.0 statistical package (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA) was used.

Research constraints

The constraints of the present study should mention the fact that the students came only from schools in Central Greece and that the participants responded voluntarily.

RESULTS

Out of 873 respondents, 50% were boys and 50% girls. The frequency of smoking was 19.2%. The attitude of teenagers towards smoking appeared positive. The mean age was 15.3. $\pm 2,18$ years. The 62.9% of respondents believed that smoking is normal. Young people thought that those who smoke are modern and closer to fashion «trendy» (73.7%). On the other hand the 4.7% of the sample said that this is a big mistake. The

83.7% had a positive opinion for the peers who smoke and the 5.7% not.

The teenagers had a positive attitude for an adult who smokes. Specifically, 40.4% of young people believed that a smoker man was polite, the 32.3% believe that was successful the 4.5% says that was “real man” the 1.3% thought that is wealthy and the 21,7% said that he hadn't confidence in himself. For an adult smoker woman teenager believed that she is polite (43.8%), successful (32.3%), “she was a real woman” (1.7%), wealthy (0.6%) and the 21.6% said that she hadn't confidence in herself, (Table 1).

As to the social attitudes about 81.7% believes that smoking helps you lose weight while 18.3% do not. Also, the 68% thought that “light cigarettes” was safer than normal while 32% disagree.

Finally, the smokers in both sexes had more positive attitude for smoking. The linear regression model for predicting the attitudes towards smoking showed a negative correlation between age and attitudes to smoking (the younger people had more positive attitudes towards smoking), (Table 2).

DISCUSSION

Smoking in adolescence is a modern problem with increasing epidemic dimensions. According to Center for Disease Control and Prevention (C.D.C.), in 2012, in the United States about 3.6 million students use smoke.

Estimates for every adult person who die from smoking (about 1,200 per day) 2 adolescents become systematic smokers. Early initiation in smoking activity appears to be directly related to the occurrence of acute or chronic health problems. It is estimated that about 6 million teenagers who smoke today will die to the future and 8.6 million will suffer from primary or secondary health problems by tobacco exposure.¹²⁻¹⁴

The present study shows that adolescents acquire smoking behavior which may be related to basic psychological characteristics of adolescence for example the search for new experiences, attempt independence from parents, accession to the peer group and need to accept them, the quest for identity, affirmation of autonomy and rebellion.¹⁵⁻¹⁷

The high incidence rates of smoking in adolescents in the most countries highlight the magnitude of the problem and the epidemic dimension of the problem. As illustrated by this study adolescents have a positive attitude towards smoking. They think it normal to smoke with their peers and reward them for this movement. According to the Control Center for Infectious Diseases of the United States of America the 24.6% of high school students and the 7.7% of the middle school students, are systematic smokers. In Europe, according to Baska et al.,⁶ The percentage of systematic smoker estimate at 22% for boys and 18% for girls.

The adult smoking as displayed by the media is promoting a modern lifestyle and also creating a positive attitude to smoking activity and behavior which seems to be adapted from children. The exculpation of smoke and the continuous promotion of smoking in all aspects of daily activity creates in teenagers a false sense of inclusion in society and in the adult world.¹⁸⁻¹⁹

According to study results of Ganley et al.,²⁰ strong predictors to start teenagers the smoking are friends who smoke, family smoking environment and the belief that most people smokes.

This study shows a positive attitude of adolescent in smoking behavior of adults. Specifically, the majority of the sample believes that smoker the man and the woman are successful, polite and wealthy.

Another important parameter that determines adolescent attitudes in the use of tobacco products is that parents' smoking behavior. Recent epidemiological studies demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between parental use of tobacco products and smoking in teenagers. It is estimated that children of parents who smoke are twice as likely to become systematic smokers in the future as non-smokers.²¹

A survey by Moeini et al.,²² in Iran shows that children living in a smoking environment have a 4.44 times greater chance of becoming smokers in the future than children whose



parents do not smoke. Another study by Nelson et al.,²³ showed that parental smoking is a predisposing factor in smoking behavior in children.

There are many reports that teenagers want to imitate their peers, in the social habits or in characteristics of their behavior, such as smoking. Social influence becomes as one of the main determinants of smoking habits, although it needs a further investigation of this situation because it is a multifactorial phenomenon with biological and social factors.^{13,15,18}

According to the literature we observe that teenagers are affected three times more than adults, to start smoking through exposure of tobacco products in films or cinema.^{18,19} In the USA, it is estimated that the television audience exposed to smoking content averaging 5 minutes during a television program, while the anti-smoking messages are limited to 43 seconds.²³⁻²⁶

The friendly environment of adolescents contributes decisively to the onset of smoking and the adoption of smoking behaviors. Examining the literature, there is a positive interaction between the onset of smoking, smoking and the friendly environment.²⁶

According to Abreu et al.,²⁸ the sex, age, school performance and the family environment were identified as predisposing factors for smoking initiation. In particular, smoking between the friendly and family environment

is related to the onset of adolescent activity in teenage age.

Mak et al.,²⁹ says that a smoker's good friend is positively related to the onset, adoption and addiction to the smoking habit. Also a positive correlation presents the friendly environment with restarting or stopping smoking.

According to Public Health Research United Kingdom Consortium the positive attitude of young people to smoking formed according to age, the friendly or parental environment and social influences. Teenagers believe that smoking helps people to relax if they are nervous, smoking isn't dangerous if someone smokes a few cigarettes, also believe that smokers kept weak and people who smoke are more social than non smokers.³⁰

According to Piko the attitudes of teenagers towards smoking are as follows: anti-smoking attitude, pleasant attitude, worrying attitude, antipathy and realistic attitude. According to the investigator, attitudes are formed according to age and gender and should be taken seriously the interventions of Professionals Health.³¹

A similar study of Castrucci et al.,³² concludes that the positive attitude of the friendly and parental environment on the smoking habits have a positive influence on the onset of smoking in adolescence.

The contribution of social influence may be indirect, meaning that the teenager waits for others to define the behavior, or direct,

through observation of the behavior of others and the impact that has on their health, or in their social visibility of success. In the second case this is achieved by imitation.^{12,17,19,25}

CONCLUSION

Finally this study shows the attitude of teenagers towards smoking presented positive while smoking activity has high acceptance. The identification of factors that shape the attitudes of young people towards smoking is a key factor in preventing the problem and in designing prevention programs. The future efforts of health professionals concerning the emergence of factors that shapes a positive attitude to smoking such as the research process or starting of antismoking campaign even in childhood. In this way government has the main role. The increase of state funds for implementation of prevention programs, the implementation of programs in all population groups with emphasis on children and the reassessment of the prevention programs can help children to adopting antismoking character and to reduce the negative effects of smoking.

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ANNEX

TABLE 1. The attitude of teenagers about a smoker adult man and woman.

	Smoker adult man		Smoker adult woman	
	N	%	N	%
He/She is successful	282	32,3	282	32,3
He/She is polite	353	40,3	382	43,8
He/She is wealthy	11	1,3	5	0,6
He/she hasn't confidence on himself/herself	189	21,6	189	21,6
He is a "real man", She is a "real woman"	38	4,5	15	1,7
Total	873	100,0	873	100,0

TABLE 2. Linear regression model for predicting the attitudes towards smoking.

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	p	95% CI	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
Constant	23,120	0,430	53,819	<0,001	22,277	23,963
Age group	-0,163	0,061	-2,656	0,008	-0,283	-0,043