

Tendency of Smoking, Factors Influencing and Knowledge Related to Smoking among Male Students in Tamil Primary School in Kuala Lumpur

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Abstract : The aims of this study were to determine the prevalence of smoking, reasons for tried smoking, factors that influence smoking, and knowledge level on health risk among male Tamil primary school students. Seven urban Tamil primary schools in Kuala Lumpur were identified based on cluster sampling. A cross-sectional study was conducted in May 2014 and a total of 380 male children in standard 4 and 5 were selected. Survey included information on history of ever smoking even a puff, smoking a whole cigarette, smoking every day at least for 7 days, reasons for tried smoking, potential factors of smoking and knowledge related to smoking and health. Fifty seven had previously smoked, with a prevalence of 15.0% (95% CI = 11.4, 18.6) and 17 had smoked a whole cigarette (4.5%, 95% CI = 2.42, 6.58) while 8 had at least smoked 7 days continuously (2.1%, 95% CI = 0.66, 3.54). The reasons for tried smoking were because of curiosity (63.2%), it is not allowed (42.6%), it is relaxing (35.2%), it is cool (33.3%), to lose weight (20.4%), style (1.8%), by mistake (0.5%), for prayers purpose (0.3%), given by uncle (0.3%), and introduced by elder brother (0.3%). None of these reasons were associated with age factors ($p > 0.05$). Of those who had smoked a whole cigarette, 42.9% were significantly influenced by father ($\chi^2 (1) = 6.42, p = 0.040$) and 47.8% were significantly influenced by friends ($\chi^2 (2) = 6.27, p = 0.043$). Overall 91.5% had good level of knowledge about smoking, where the majority knew that smoking was dangerous to their health. However only 61.7% and 63.1% of them knew that smoking can cause high blood pressure and stroke, respectively. There is no significant different in mean rank between 10 years old and 11 years old students ($p=0.987 < 0.05$) for level of knowledge, tested by Mann-Whitney U Test. Odds of smoking increased 1.37 times having seen actors smoking (95% CI= 1.01, 1.86), 1.55 times having a father who smokes (95% CI= 1.26, 1.92), 1.64 times having siblings who smokes (95% CI= 1.32, 2.04), and 10.55 times having friends who offered cigarette (95% CI= 4.17, 26.68). As a conclusion, cessation of smoking in family members, who are role models, so as to reduce rates to taking up smoking among children.

Keywords : factors influence, knowledge on smoking, prevalence on smoking, reasons

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