

## First Step into a Smoke-Free Life: The Effectivity of Peer Education Programme of Midwifery Students

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**Abstract :** Today the habit of cigarette smoking is among one of the most important public health concerns because of the health problems it leads to. The most important and hazardous group to use tobacco and tobacco products is adolescents and teenagers. And one of the most effective ways to prevent them from starting to smoke is education. This research is a kind of educational intervention study which was carried out in order to evaluate the effect of peer education on the teenagers' knowledge about smoking. The research was carried out between October 15, 2013 and September 9, 2015 at Ege University Atatürk Vocational Health School. The population of the research comprised of the students that have been studying at Ege University Atatürk Vocational Health School, Midwifery Department (N=390). The peer educator group that would give training on smoking consisted of 10 people, and the peer groups that would be trained were divided into two groups via simple randomization as experimental group (n=185) and control group (n=185). Questionnaire, information evaluation form, and informed consent forms were used as data collection tools. The analysis of the data which were collected in the study was carried out on Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 15.0). It was found out that 62.5 % of the students who were in peer educator group had smoked in some period of their lives; however, none of them continued to smoke. When they were asked about their reasons to start smoking, 25% said they just wanted to try it, and 25% of them answered that it was because of their friend groups. When the pre-peer education and post-peer education point averages of peer educator group were evaluated, the results showed that there was a significant difference between the point averages ( $p < 0.05$ ). When the cigarette use of experimental group and the control group were evaluated, it was clear that 18.2% of the experimental group and 24.2% of the control group still smokes. 9.1% of the experimental group and 14.8% of control group stated that they started smoking because of their friend groups. Among the students who smoke 15.9% of the ones who belongs to the experimental group and 21.9% of the ones who belong to the control group stated they are thinking of quitting smoking. It was clear that there is a significant difference between the pre-education and post-education point averages of experimental group statistically ( $p \leq 0.05$ ); however, in terms of control group, there were no significant differences between the pre-test post-test averages statistically. Between the pre-test post-test averages of experimental and control groups there were not any statistically significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ). It was found out in the study that the peer education programme is not effective on the smoking habit of Vocational Health School students. When the future studies are being planned in order to evaluate the peer education activity, it can be taken into consideration that the peer education takes a long term and the students in the educator group will be more enthusiastic and a kind of leader in their environment.

**Keywords :** midwifery, peer, peer education, smoking

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