

Reducing Tobacco Consumption in a Rural Village of Sri Lanka Through a Community Based Health Promotion Intervention

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Abstract : Evidence-based health promotional approaches are known to be successful ways of reducing tobacco consumption in a rural village. Hence tobacco prevention is essential in improving lives of people, and community-based approaches are considered as effective. This community-based health promotion intervention implemented to reduce high consumption of tobacco in a rural area in Sri Lanka. This intervention was conducted in a rural village of Sri Lanka. In the beginning, facilitation discussions conducted with community members to identify determinants leading to tobacco consumption among villagers. Intervention was planned based on those determinants. Community actions through small active groups to demote smoking were generated. Children groups displayed cigarette buds collected around common places such as temple to community gatherings including funeral welfare society elaborating the cost and the money spent on cigarettes. A till (expenditure box) was introduced, and smokers in family were encouraged to put money on a cigarette to it when they decide to smoke instead. This way they could monitor potential savings if quit. Children groups introduced a tool 'Engalanthe puthata (for overseas son)' to shops. Shop owners agreed to add a pebble to a box whenever they sell a cigarette. The money spent on cigarettes in that shop was calculated regularly, and that was considered as money sent to tobacco company overseas, so to the son of the company owner. This was useful to encourage quitting and to stop selling cigarette in the shops. All four shops in the community volunteered to stop selling cigarettes. Eleven percent of users quitted smoking and 37% users reduced smoking. Child empowerment was high, and 60% of children had shown their disapproval on smoking publicly at least once. Similar community-based health promotion intervention can be used to generate community actions leading to reduction of tobacco consumption.

Keywords : cigarette, community, empowerment, health promotion, intervention

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