

An exploratory study on Gutkha and Smokeless Tobacco Consumption

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Tobacco is the single greatest cause of non-communicable disease and is likely to produce a world pandemic unless urgent preventive action is taken. A high priority is to be given to prevention of tobacco related cancers, by all concerned, including Nurses. Giving up the tobacco habit is one of the basic necessities for healthy living. This should be primarily taught to every individual.

Objectives of the Study :

1. To identify the factors associated with the consumption of gutkha and smokeless tobacco.
2. To find out the practices of consumption of gutkha and smokeless tobacco.
3. To identify any abnormal changes in the oral cavity due to the consumption of gutkha and smokeless tobacco.

For the present study the research approach used was, an exploratory descriptive survey.

Data collection was carried out on three hundred and thirty six subjects from S.N.D.T. Women's University, Mumbai. (Churchgate and Juhu Campus).

The data collection period began from 1st of August and lasted till 10th of September, 2000. The information was obtained by structured interview and an observation checklist. The interview time for each client was limited to fifteen to twenty minutes. In order to achieve objectives of the study, each subject was interviewed personally. The data collection was analyzed in terms of frequency and percentage. (Table, pie and bar graphs.)

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Demographic Data

Majority of the subjects were males (66

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percent) and female peons were (34 percent). Majority of the subjects were in the age group of 31 to 40 years (41 percent). All subjects were educated. Subjects with the least education were peons – primary education. Higher education was observed in male and female clerks. 52.68 percent subjects were skilled and 47.32 percent subjects were unskilled.

2. Information regarding the use of tobacco among the subjects

The use of tobacco in the subjects who are peons is alarmingly high, majority (64.29 percent) of the male peons were using smokeless tobacco regularly. The prevalence of smokeless tobacco consumption on female peons subjects was 42.10 percent. The prevalence of smokeless tobacco consumption in male clerks was 14.45 percent and in female clerks it was 2 percent. The use of tobacco before going to toilet was found in majority of subjects and a very common use of tobacco was found after and before a stressful situation.

3. Factors sustaining the use of tobacco

Factors which sustained the use of tobacco was the easy accessibility at work place and home. Majority of the samples used "Tambacchi" in different forms as gutkha, jarda, mawa, pan with tobacco adding catechu, pan parag, and masheri was very common, which is highly carcinogenic. The most frequently used brand by the sample population was Pandharpuri (50.89 percent) and most frequently used brand – Manikchand gutkha (15.17 percent). Tobacco and Panmasala (28.87 percent). This was because of the low cost, easy availability and effect of nicotine addiction.

4. Factors influenced the use of tobacco

Factors which influenced the use of tobacco were peer pressure 61 percent in peons and 83 percent in male clerks.

Influence of media were 83 percent, media that influenced the habit of tobacco was T.V. films, advertisements and sports.

5. Family Practices of tobacco use

There was high prevalence of family practices with regard to tobacco consumption in the sample population. Fathers (26 percent), were found to have the highest frequency of influence on the subjects developing the habit of consumption followed by mothers and spouses (17.85 percent).

6. Changes in the oral cavity

The negative effect of tobacco chewing was found in the majority of the samples, 33.33% subjects consumed all forms of smokeless tobacco out of 336. Three subjects were found to have submucosal fibrosis. Ulceration and stomatitis was found in 52.57%. Breathlessness was reported by 15 subjects and high blood pressure reported by 8.92%. Poor oral hygiene was found in 55 subjects, increased sensation to hot and cold food was found among 20.53% subjects. Stains on teeth were found in all tobacco users. Plaques and cavities were also found among majority of subjects. 84% were not aware of carcinogenic content of tobacco, and they are not aware and concerned about ill effects on health. Majority of them started use of tobacco since young age and frequency of using tobacco more than 10 to 12 times a day were found.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed an alarming prevalence of smokeless tobacco and gutkha consumption.

The reasons for tobacco consumption were social factors, family practices, cultural factors, influences of friends, media and other personal factors and market force. →

Diseases related to tobacco consumption can be decreased if the consumption is discouraged through health awareness programmes. Nurses can play a pivotal role in organizing and executing creative awareness programmes for all vulnerable sections of society, which is needed, such as, "The World No Tobacco Day" which is held on 31st May every year, to provide an opportunity for all those who use tobacco to stop doing so for at least twenty four hours. And, using eye catching slogans such as,

**"QUIT TOBACCO NOW
ELSE TOBACCO WILL
EAT YOU ONE DAY"**

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