

Review Article

Medical and Social Aspects of Smoking in Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

The article shows the outcomes of the surveys conducted among 1,000 households; describes tobacco products' consumption prevalence rate among urban and rural population by sex and age categories, and among the women of fertile age as well. There is also demonstrated an impact of tobacco consumption on quality of life; and smokers' disability and mortality rate. The activities on strengthening tobacco control among the population of the Republic are stated.

Key words: smoking, tobacco, nasvay, woman, fertile age, youth.

INTRODUCTION

Tobacco dependence has become a global problem. According to the WHO's data, smoking is one of the basic causes of population's mortality. At the present time, approximately five million people die from smoking annually. A burden of tobacco-attributable diseases has been shared equally by developing and developed countries. It is estimated that if the current smoking pattern continues, tobacco will kill 10 million people annually by the year 2030 – more than any other cause of death^[1]. The objective of the article is as follows: to study smoking prevalence rate, morbidity and mortality because of tobacco-attributable diseases; and to develop strong preventive measures on tobacco control among population of Uzbekistan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials for survey were the results of the issue studied in 9 of 14 regions of Uzbekistan. There were selected 1,000 households and some women of fertile age (to be asked), living in the southern region of the Republic, what ensured representativeness of data acquired. The

members of the selected households at the age of 15 (and older) were questioned according to the developed questionnaires. Women and young people were questioned apart from other members of the family with the purpose of ensuring the consistency of data on tobacco consumption. On the whole there were questioned 3,745 adults (of the family) and 1,529 women of fertile age.


In-patients and outpatients have been examined in 30 medical establishments. There were selected sporadic diseases, which are often caused by tobacco consumption.

OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION

It is established that population of Uzbekistan consumes two types of tobacco products: cigarettes and smokeless tobacco for sublingual using, the so-called "nasvay". "Nasvay" is a home-made tobacco product, which is not recognized as an officially marketable product and the volume of its circulation is not registered by government bodies. "Nasvay" consumption is widely spread in rural areas and, as a rule, among the low-income groups.

It is also established that 21% of population of the Republic consume tobacco products: tobacco consumption among men comprises 20% and among women – 1%; thus, 11% respondents consume "nasvay" and 10%–smoke cigarettes. The level of both tobacco products' consumption is the highest among men at the age of 30 to 59 years of age; and "nasvay" consumption is spread in all age groups in rural areas.

A sociological survey was conducted among the fertile-aged women living in outlying rural districts. 1,529 women were questioned according to the specially developed sheet, i.e. they were asked about their attitude to tobacco consumption. Female under 20 years of age comprised 7%, women of 20 to 30 years of age comprised 33.4%, of 40-49 – 37.3%. It turned out that: 1.9% of women under 20 years

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of age smoke cigarettes; 0.2% of women of 20-30 years of age used to smoke before and dropped smoking for the moment; 1% of women of 30-40 years of age smoke to the moment of survey conducted, and 0.4% of them have abstained from smoking; 0.3% of women of 40-49 years of age consume tobacco products, and 0.5% of them have abstained from smoking.

The obtained data suggest a high addiction of youth to smoking, and this is a certain problem from medical and social point of view.^[2]

Smoking prevalence rate was 9% for cigarettes and 15% for “nasvay” among men with low education, and 21% and 25% respectively among those who have complete secondary education. Prevalence rate for cigarettes comprised 26%, and 19% – for “nasvay” at the higher education group of men. This fact shows that even those people, who are educated enough, do not properly realize a danger coming from tobacco and “nasvay” smoking. The level of “nasvay” smoking among educated and propertied groups of population lowers due to its unpopularity among these groups of population.

It is of a definite interest to study: interrelation between the level of households’ income and the level of tobacco products’ consumption; the volume of expenses for both tobacco products’ consumption and treatment of tobacco-attributable diseases. With this view we have classified households (according to the level of their monthly income) into the following categories: poor, middle income and rich. It is established that the level of “nasvay” smoking among the people of low income level is comparatively higher for the reason that “nasvay” is lower in cost as compared to cigarettes. It is studied out that both “nasvay” and cigarettes are equally consumed by men of middle income level. “Nasvay” smoking is more prevalent among men in rural areas than the men in urban areas; and a cigarette smoking is prevalent among the men in cities.

Calculations show that smokers consume 325.1 million packs of cigarettes during a year; this is about 10.9% higher than total legally produced 294 million packs of cigarettes in Uzbekistan. However, it should be taken into consideration that smokers often tend to lower the level of their actual smoking of cigarettes.

Analysis of smoking rate intensity revealed that both the average number of smoking days and the quantity of cigarettes smoked a day, grow with the increase of years. Thus, majority of heavy smokers (11 and more cigarettes a day) among men were observed in the age groups of: 30-39 (26%); and 40-49 years of age (43%). It is also established that shares of heavy smokers grow as they (the smokers) get older.

Intensity rate of “nasvay” consumption among men at the age of 30-39 comprises 31% and 21% – at the age of 40-49. “Nasvay” is not popular among the youth and women.

As a rule, smokers try to smoke outside of dwelling premises. However, in 20% of households, they smoke in the kitchen and corridor in cold weather, and in 12% of households they smoke there all-the-year-around. Hereby, in 20% of households non-smoking members are passive

smokers, suffering from all the negative after-effects typical of this type of smoking.

The majority of people start smoking after the age of 16. About 9% of smokers tried a cigarette or “nasvay” for the first time before the age of 16. The overall period of cigarette smoking or “nasvay” consumption lengthens as the years go by. The most worrisome fact is that the smokers at the age of 20-29 (23%) and the smokers at the age of 30-39 (71%) have the same smoking period of more than 10 years.

Most respondents (77%) believe that the tobacco smoking has the biggest impact on lungs or respiratory apparatus on the whole. Only 9% of them think that the biggest impact is on cardiovascular system. It should be particularly noted that 15% of respondents couldn’t answer the question on the harm of “nasvay”, as they had no information on it.

Smokers assert that the price of tobacco products may cause the decrease of their consumption. Thus, the respondents pointed out that if the price of cigarettes is leveled up, then 13%–18% of them will give up smoking at all, 33% will smoke less than before, 21% will switch to cheaper tobacco products; and 7% of respondents are ready to switch to “nasvay” consumption.

It is known that smokers lose significant years of potential lives due to a high rate of tobacco-attributable morbidity and premature mortality of population. For example, 12,140,305 adult people (at the age of 18 and older) over the country suffered from various diseases in 2004, and among those 241,400 suffered from tobacco-attributable diseases. 17,513 people suffered from malignant diseases, among those 3,679 are men (in particular due to smoking). 41% (or 38,296) of 35 years old and older male died from tobacco-attributable diseases, smoking was responsible for 10,480 (27,4%) of the total male deaths in 2004. Out of those people who died by reason of smoking, almost every fourth person (23,4%) died from malignancy.

The findings give testimony to the population’s (both men and women) strong adherence to tobacco smoking.

This situation on tobacco consumption in the Republic needs to develop a task program on tobacco control among the population, including the women of fertile age and youth. One of the effective measures is considered to be improvement of the explanatory work along with the active involvement of mass media. For this purpose, it is necessary to: screen antismoking b-rolls, television and radio broadcast on the harm of smoking; develop information and educational materials (booklets, posters, pamphlets, instruction sheets); proscribe smoking in public places, as well as announce educational institutions to be free of smoking. It is expedient (in each educational institution) to conduct regular task-oriented campaign devoted to the No tobacco day.

It is worthy an opinion on setting up a mobile team consisting of narcologists, psychoneurologists, general practitioners and other specialists to steer a course of lectures, conversations and other types of explanatory work for population especially among the women and young people.

To date in Uzbekistan there are developed and implemented programs on health promotion; smoking, drug and alcohol dependence prevention among the youth. In 2008 (designated as the Year of Youth) in Uzbekistan there was adopted a Government program, and one of its sections is devoted to pernicious habits prevention, especially smoking among the youth. Multimedia information on the harm of smoking from the viewpoint of clinical epidemiology and evidence based medicine must be available for everyone.

Thus, tobacco products consumption in the Republic becomes a serious problem for Uzbekistan. The Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted an ad hoc program on tobacco control strengthening. To date there is carried a work to completion on acceding of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the International WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

CONCLUSION

1. In the Republic at the time of survey conduction 21% of population consumed tobacco, 11% of them smoked “nasvay” and 10% – cigarettes.
2. Women of fertile age (depending on the age) smoked: 1.9% of them smoked up to 20 years of age, and about 0.3% – at the age of 40-49.

3. Prevalence of both tobacco products’ consumptions among men is the highest in the age group of 30 – 59. In rural areas “nasvay” consumption is equally popular in all age groups.
4. Heavy smokers (11 and more cigarettes a day) among men are observed in the age groups of 30-39 (26%) and of 40-49 years of age (43%). There is also established that shares of heavy smokers grow as they get older.
5. 15% of respondents consider “nasvay” harmless as they have no relevant information on it.

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