

TOBACCO SMOKING HABITS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

PALENIE TYTONIU WŚRÓD MŁODZIEŻY SZKÓŁ PONADPODSTAWOWYCH

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Authors' contribution

Wkład autorów:

- A. Study design/planning
zaplanowanie badań
- B. Data collection/entry
zebranie danych
- C. Data analysis/statistics
dane – analiza i statystyki
- D. Data interpretation
interpretacja danych
- E. Preparation of manuscript
przygotowanie artykułu
- F. Literature analysis/search
wyszukiwanie i analiza literatury
- G. Funds collection
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Dear Editor,

For several years, we have been observing a positive trend of the reduction in the number of young people taking up tobacco smoking. However, the age when people initiate this habit is particularly worrisome. Smoking traditional tobacco products is as harmful as using their equivalents, such as chewing tobacco [1,2]. The issue is noticed on a global scale, according to the information provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as nationwide, as indicated by the Polish Ministry of Health. Smoking is a common problem in Poland. It is estimated that 29% of adults smoke tobacco, of which 34% are men, and 23% are women [3], whereas young people most often initiate smoking within groups of their peers. Smoking leads to a series of health consequences, including acceleration of cell ageing processes, the weakening of immune system functions, which significantly influences the risk of tobacco-related diseases in adult life, increased frequency of lesions related to cardiac muscle ischemia, and to physical and mental addiction to nicotine [4].

In a questionnaire answered by 235 students of secondary schools (from Lublin Province), 6.8% people declared smoking traditional cigarettes, whereas 11.5% stated they smoked electronic cigarettes. Nearly half of the respondents (45.5%) admitted that they attempted smoking. Most people smoked occasionally (11.1%). 5.5% of the students smoked cigarettes on a daily basis, and 1.7% did it several times a week. Young people, most often, did not hide the fact of smoking from their friends (16.2%), but the students tended to hide it more frequently from their parents (13.6%). The frequency of smoking among young people increased along with a deterioration in the family's financial status ($p=0.015$; χ^2 10.470; Cramér's V 0.211) and decreased depending on the education level of the parents (mother: $p=0.001$; χ^2 15.802; Cramér's V 0.260; father: $p=0.000$; χ^2 22.065; Cramér's V 0.309). The frequency of smoking declared by the respondents was significantly

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Słowa kluczowe: nikotyna, młodzież, palenie, higiena, profilaktyka

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higher, when parents also used tobacco products ($p=0.033$; Chi^2 4.546). A vast majority of the students (79.6%) claimed that smoking is harmful to health, whereas 2.5% of the respondents were convinced that this addiction is harmless. More than 11% of the students were of the opinion that smoking could be harmful to health, but only after many years of continued smoking.

The results of the study indicate that slightly more than 18% of the secondary school students turn to tobacco products, which confirms the downward trend observed in recent years [5]. This proves the effectiveness of actions to promote a healthy lifestyle, but it does not mean that continued health education is no longer necessary. It is also vital to remember the role of the impact of the family environment on the formation of health behaviors of children and adolescents. The increase in the social disapproval of cigarette smoking and use of their equivalents in the public space is also a result of widespread social campaigns and actions to prevent cardiovascular diseases and tumors, which are currently the main causes for premature deaths.

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