

REVIEW

RATE OF TOBACCO USE AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE YOUNGER GENERATION IN TURKEY

Abdul-Ghaffar DONKOR¹  Nimetcan MEHMET² 

1 Bagabaga Health Centre, Sagnarigu District Health Directorate, Sagnarigu, Tamale, Ghana
2 Department of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University

ABSTRACT

Objective: The study aims to assess the rate of tobacco use and its effects on the younger generation in Turkey through a systematic review..

Methods: A review was conducted on the rate of tobacco use in Turkey and its effects on the younger ones. Articles reviewed were retrieved from Sciencedirect, Google scholar, Medline and PubMed on tobacco use.

Results: The study revealed that about 14.5 million adults and 252,000 children in Turkey use tobacco every day. It also revealed that more males smoke than females. The effects of smoking on the younger generation do not only include health problems from second hand smoking and others but also an avenue for children to initiate smoking early. The country has tobacco control laws since 1997.

Conclusion: The rate of smoking is high and its effects are numerous. There are good anti-tobacco laws in Turkey but much effort needs to be done in reducing the rate of smoking in Turkey.

Key Words: Tobacco, Smoking, Effects, Children, Turkey

ÖZET

Türkiye'deki Tütün Kullanım Oranı ve Genç Nesiller Üzerine Etkisi

Amaç: Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'deki tütün kullanım oranını ve genç nesiller üzerindeki etkilerini değerlendirmektir.

Yöntem : Bu çalışmada Türkiye'de tütün kullanım oranı ve gençlere etkileri üzerine inceleme yapılmıştır. Yayınlanan çalışmalar PubMed, ScienceDirect, Google Akademik veri tabanlarında değerlendirildi.

Bulgular: Çalışma, Türkiye'de yaklaşık 14.5 milyon yetişkin ve 252.000 çocuğun her gün tütün kullandığını ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, erkeklerin sigara içme oranının kadınlara göre daha yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Sigara içmenin genç nesiller üzerindeki etkileri sadece ikinci el sigara içimi veya neden olduğu diğer sağlık sorunlarını değil, aynı zamanda çocukların erken yaşta sigara içmeye başlaması olduğu dikkat çekmiştir. Ülkede tütün kontrol yasası 1997 yılından beri yürürlüktedir.

Tartışma: Türkiye'de sigara içme oranı yüksektir ve çeşitli birçok etkileri mevcuttur. Yürürlükteki tütün karşıtı yasalara karşın Türkiye'de sigara içme oranını azaltmak için daha çok çaba sarf edilmesi gerekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tütün, Sigara İçme, Etkileri, Çocuklar, Türkiye

Cite this article as: Donkor A, Mehmet N. Rate Of Tobacco Use And Its Effects On The Younger Generation In Turkey. Medical Research Reports 2020;3(2):35-38.

INTRODUCTION

Tobacco products are products made entirely or partly of leaf tobacco as raw material, which are intended to be smoked, sucked, chewed or snuffed. All contain the highly addictive psychoactive ingredient, nicotine. The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health problems globally [1]. Smoking is a major risk factor for malignancies, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and many other health problems [2]. Globally, it kills more than 7 million people a year. More than 6 million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use while around 890 000 are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke [1]. In 2015, over 1.1 billion people smoked tobacco. Far more males than females smoked tobacco. Although it is declining worldwide and in many countries, the prevalence of tobacco smoking appears to be increasing in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region and the African Region [1]. Tobacco smoking causes numerous health problems in infants and children, including more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections, sudden infant death syndrome, cancers and other health conditions.

In Turkey, more than 100 000 people die every year as a consequence of smoking (a quarter of all deaths), a number that is estimated to rise to 240 000 by 2030[2]. Various laws are in place in Turkey to curb this public health problem yet the problem still persists. The study therefore aimed to explore the effects of tobacco smoking on the younger generation and what needs to be done in curbing this problem in Turkey.

METHOD

A detailed review of published articles on tobacco use was conducted. Search was conducted in PubMed, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar databases to retrieve studies published on tobacco use. The keywords used were tobacco, smoking, rate, effects, children, Turkey. Only articles, reports, statistics from TURKSTAT, and other international organizations published in English Language were included. Unofficial statistics and unpublished reports were excluded from this study. Only full-length articles and reports were reviewed in this study. It is established that tobacco use is one of the main public health challenges in Turkey. We reviewed studies base on the research question 'Does tobacco use have serious effects on the younger generation (children) in Turkey?' and we tried to find out the answer through this review and offered recommendations.

Literature was reviewed on 18 articles which focused on the incidence of tobacco use, anti-tobacco laws and tobacco effects on the younger generation (children) in Turkey after exclusion criteria applied. Two of the articles elaborated on the incidence of tobacco use in Turkey. Five focused on anti-tobacco laws in Turkey and the remaining eleven articles focused on the effects of tobacco use on the younger generation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Rate of Tobacco Use in Turkey

The rate of tobacco use in Turkey is very high. According to TURKSTAT, Turkey Health Interview Survey, over 40% of the population in Turkey has smoked tobacco before. It indicated that only 56.5% of the Turkish population never smoked in 2016[3]. New estimates from tobacco atlas in 2019 showed that about 14.5 million adults and 252,000 children in Turkey use tobacco every day[4].

Daily smokers' percentage in Turkey in 2016 was 26.5%. Daily smokers are those who smoke tobacco every day. 4.1% were occasional smokers—those who do not smoke every day. 12.9% have smoked before but have stopped. It also indicated that more males smoke tobacco than females in Turkey. About 40% of males smoke in Turkey while only about 13% of the females smoke tobacco [3]. International Comparison of Daily Tobacco consumption in 2015 revealed that Turkey is the third country in the world that uses tobacco a lot. Chile was the first country followed by Greece [3].

Anti-Tobacco Laws in Turkey

Because of the high rate of smoking in Turkey, Turkey has put a lot of measures in place to reduce the rate of smoking.

"Law on Preventing Harms of Tobacco Products, No. 4207" was accepted by the parliament on November 7, 1997, and approved by the president on November 26, 1997. The law includes the following: Banned smoking at health, education, sports and cultural facilities, and offices in which five or more persons work; Banned smoking on public transport and on flights, ships, trains, and busses; Banned all kinds of advertisement and promotion of tobacco products; Banned selling tobacco products to youth less than 18 years of age; tasked television networks to broadcast programs and advertisements on the harms of smoking for 90 minutes per month; and also indicate "tobac-

co harms health" on tobacco packaged as health warning to users [2].

More so, Turkey signed the WHO framework convention on tobacco control in 2004. The Tobacco Control Law was substantially amended in 2008 and is now one of the most advanced tobacco control laws in the world [5]. With this, Turkey became one of the first six countries in world to have a strong anti-tobacco law [4]. In addition, a National Tobacco Control Programme was organized with the participation of related ministries, universities and non-governmental organizations. The main objective of the Programme was to increase the proportion of people aged over 15 years who do not smoke to 80%, and reduce smoking among youngsters aged under 15 years and below to nil [2]. Also Since 2002, Turkey has significantly increased tobacco taxes. The effective total tax rate of retail price of tobacco in Turkey has increased from 64.8 percent in 2002 to 83 percent in 2017 [6].

Furthermore, starting from 2019, Turkey adopted plain packaging of tobacco law in fight against smoking. This means that cigarette and other tobacco products must be sold in uniform packages with a prominent display of health warnings. The logo of the tobacco company or the brand will be absent on the new packages [7]. The aims of plain packaging are to: reduce the attractiveness of tobacco products; eliminate the effect of tobacco packaging as a form of advertising and promotion; eliminate package design techniques that may suggest that some products are less harmful than others; and increase the noticeability and effectiveness of health warnings [8].

Despite these measures in place, there has not been much reduction of the rate of tobacco use in the recent years. For example, the total percentage of daily smokers in 2012 was 23.2%, 27.3 in 2014 and 26.5% in 2016 respectively [3]. These figures are not encouraging since there isn't constant reduction in rate from 2012 to 2016. Much needs to be done in reducing the high rate of tobacco use.

Effect on the Upcoming Generations

The current high rate of smoking in Turkey has bad effects on the young ones (Children). This is only not related to the various health conditions that people acquire through second hand smoke but also the influence it has on the young ones in smoking initiation. Secondhand smoke is the combination of smoke from the burning end of a cigarette and the smoke breathed out by smokers. It con-

tains more than 7,000 chemicals. Hundreds are toxic and about 70 can cause various cancers [9]. There is no risk-free level of exposure to second-hand smoke. Secondhand smoke causes numerous health problems in infants and children, including more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections, sudden infant death syndrome and other conditions [10]. Most adult smokers began smoking during adolescence [11]. Studies show that parental smoking increases the risk of the young ones' (adolescents) smoking initiation [12]. The likelihood of adolescent smoking increases with the number of smoking parents and the number of years exposed to parental smoking [13,14]. Vuolu and Staff conducted a study which also revealed that there is strong relationship between parental smoking and adolescent smoking. It explained that parents who smoke usually have children in the adolescence smoking to [15]. Maternal smoking during pregnancy is associated with several fetal developmental complications with increased risk of long-term complications [16]. Nicotine crosses the placenta and may cause fetal developmental problems [17]. This may lead to low birth weight, preterm babies and fetal hypoxia [18]. Other conditions may include overweight and obesity, brain developmental and cardiovascular problems [16,19]. The upcoming generation (children and those yet to be born) will be faced with the problems above if the rate of smoking does not decrease drastically in Turkey. Any child who is born or lives in Turkey faces most of these challenges even if born by parents who non-smokers. Children born by non-smoking parents will suffer the effects of secondhand smoke and may end up taking up the behavior of smoking from peers especially in schools.

The rate of tobacco use in Turkey is not decreasing significantly most probably due to the fact that children in Turkey keep taking up the behaviors of their smoking parents. Most children may think that smoking is a normal thing, so they start smoking the little opportunity they get.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There are good anti-tobacco laws in Turkey which try to reduce the rate of smoking in Turkey but the rate is still high. Much effort needs to be put in place to help reduce the effects of smoking in Turkey especially on the upcoming generation. There is the need to ensure that anti-socialization programmes are implemented. This involves internalization of attitudinal and behavioral norms aga-

inst smoking initiation, parental monitoring of smoking, teaching the negative consequences of smoking and the benefits of not smoking. There is also the need for parents to stop smoking in the presence of the children. There should be strict laws on smoking while driving private cars especially when a child /children are present in the car. This could help prevent those who usually smoke in their private cars even if others are in the car with them.

Funding: No source of funding.

Conflict of interest: None

REFERENCES

1. WHO, <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco> 2018. Accessed on 5th January, 2019.
2. WHO, Tobacco Control in Turkey, 2009. http://ssuk.org.tr/eski_site_verileri/pdf/TobaccoControlinTurkey.pdf. Accessed on 5th January, 2019.
3. TURKSTAT, Turkey Health Interview Survey, 2016. <http://ohsad.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/13160.pdf>. Accessed on 5th January, 2019.
4. Mesude E. 14.5 million adults, 252,000 children smoke in Turkey: Data. <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/14-5-million-adults-252-000-children-smoke-in-turkey-data-142681>. Accessed on 1st June, 2020.
5. WHO, Tobacco Control in Turkey; Story of commitment and leadership. 2012. Public Health Institution of Turkey. Global adult tobacco survey, Turkey 2012. Ankara; 2014.
6. Ayda Y , Önder Z, Elibol M, Erk N, Cabuk A, Fisunoglu M, Erk SF, and Frank J "The Economics of Tobacco and Tobacco Taxation In Turkey." Paris: International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. Chaloupka. 2010.
7. Daily Sabah. Turkey adopts plain packaging law in fight against smoking. <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2018/12/06/turkey-adopts-plain-packaging-law-in-fight-against-smoking>. Accessed on 19th January, 2019.
8. WHO, <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/tobacco/publications/key-policy-documents/who-framework-convention-on-tobacco-control-who-fctc/key-areas-of-tobacco-control-policy/plain-packaging>. Accessed on 15th January, 2019.
9. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Let's Make the Next Generation Tobacco-Free: Your Guide to the 50th Anniversary Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/consumer-guide.pdf>) . [PDF-795 KB] Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014. Accessed on 21st January, 2019.
10. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A Report of the Surgeon General: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: What It Means to You. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010. Accessed on 21st January, 2019.
11. Gilpin EA, Lee L, Evans N, Pierce JP. Smoking initiation rates in adults and minors: United States, 1944-1988. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 1994;140(6):535-543.
12. Bricker JB, Peterson AV Jr. Sarason IG, Andersen MR, Rajan KB. Changes in the influence of parents' and close friends' smoking on adolescent smoking transitions. *Addict Behav* 2007;32(4):740-757.
13. Fergusson DM, Horwood LJ, Boden JM, Jenkin G. Childhood social disadvantage and smoking in adulthood: results of a 25-year longitudinal study. *Addiction* 2007;102(3):475-482.
14. Rossow I, Rise J. Concordance of parental and adolescent health behaviors. *Soc Sci Med* 1994;38 (9):1299-1305.
15. Vuolo M and Staff J. Parent and Child Cigarette Use: A Longitudinal, Multigenerational Study. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 2013.
16. Bruin JE, Gerstein HC, Holloway AC. Long-term consequences of fetal and neonatal nicotine exposure: a critical review. *Toxicol Sci.* 2010;116:364-74.
17. Lisboa PC, de Oliveira E, de Moura EG. Obesity and endocrine dysfunction programmed by maternal smoking in pregnancy and lactation. *Front Physiol.* 2012;3:437.
18. Ko TJ, Tsai LY, Chu LC, Yeh SJ, Leung C, Chen CY, et al. Parental smoking during pregnancy and its association with low birth weight, small for gestational age, and preterm birth offspring: a birth cohort study. *Pediatric Neonatol.* 2014;55:20-7.
19. Oken E, Levitan EB, Gillman MW. Maternal smoking during pregnancy and child overweight: systematic review and meta analysis. *Int J Obes.* 2008;32:201-10.