Perception Of Tobacco Use In Young Adults Of Urban India: A Qualitative Exploration

S. Datta¹, S. Ghose², S. Shiva³, B.E. Mullan⁴, A. Sardar⁵.

- ¹Tata Medical Center, Palliative Care and Psycho-oncology, Kolkata, India.
²Tata Medical Center, Department of Medical Administration, Kolkata, India.
³University of Newcastle, Newcastle University Business School, Newcastle, United Kingdom.
⁴University of Groningen, Faculty of Economics and Business, Groningen, The Netherlands.
⁵Techno India, Department of Hospital Management, Salt Lake- Kolkata, India.

Objectives:

A explorative qualitative study was undertaken to bridge that knowledge gap between youth’s tobacco use behaviour and their perceptions on tobacco debut, use and control.

Background and Aims:

The tobacco epidemic continues to rise in the developing world along with the burden from tobacco-associated cancers. This study explored the perceptions and reasons behind tobacco use in youth.

Materials and Methods:

In-depth qualitative interviewing was done for 30 young adults and as well as focus group discussion and participant observation were conducted in an academic non-clinical setting. Thematic analysis and coding was done to triangulate the data and generate themes.

Results and Conclusions:

Results revealed ‘social and behavioural factors’, ‘peer influence’, ‘lack of awareness or belief in the ill effects of tobacco’ and ‘paucity of medical support to quit tobacco’ as major influencers behind tobacco debut and maintenance. Tobacco was seen to be widely available and sale of loose cigarettes was noted. Managing the tobacco epidemic will need a focus on preventing tobacco debut use taking into account of the socio-cultural belief system. Findings from the study will advise health policymakers, public health professionals, clinicians, the government and other voluntary organizations to strengthen the national tobacco control efforts.

Reference: 1. Ghose S, Sardar A, Shiva S, Mullen BE, Datta SS (2019) Perception of tobacco use in young adults of urban India: A qualitative exploration with relevant health policy analysis. *Ecancermedicalscience* 13:915; www.ecancer.org; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3332/ecancer.2019.915>

Perception	Spectrum of Responses of Young Adults
Tobacco is bad for health, I don't like it and I don't smoke	<i>I am not curious, I know about the effects in our body, what happens to our lungs.... it gradually destroys the lungs, (causes) breathing problems, I know very much because my grandmother had a lung infection.... she used to take the sweet tobacco...and she died (19, female, non-smoker)</i>
I am not an addict	<i>smoking for me is not necessary, but I often do that...my headache stops when I smoke (female, 18, trying to quit)</i>
I am an addict, but I can't stop myself	<i>smoking is bad for health, but for me, smoking is an escape...now it has become an addiction (male, 20, smoker)</i>
I am trying to quit	<i>Nothing is helping me. Actually, you just need a determination that it will have to stop because I have my family and they will not like it if I start having this problem (addiction) with myself (male, 18, trying to quit tobacco and other addictions)</i>
It is not possible to quit	<i>They tried to quit but when they see other people smoking they also start...smoking is an addiction...I tried to quit smoking, I tried hard but now I am smoking again (19, male, smoker)</i>

Table 1. Range of responses of young adults

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Soumitra Shankar Datta
Visiting Research Associate
Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Institute for Women’s Health
University College London
First Floor Maple House
149 Tottenham Court Road
London W1T 7DN
Email: ssdatta2000@yahoo.com