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Introduction

It is well known that smoking causes at least 25 life-threatening diseases or groups of diseases. Smoking is also often associated with psychiatric symptoms such as high levels of anxiety disorders, depression, increased use of alcohol and other substances, poor physical condition, etc..
Damage however is caused by smoking also to those called "passive smokers" and they are those who do not smoke, but they are forced quite often to be present while someone is smoking around them. Today, passive smoking is the third preventable cause of death and has negative health effects. Empathy could help smokers control their desire to smoke in public places because they recognize that apart from the harmful effects on their body, they also harm people around them. Smokers must understand and respect the fact that people around them are not necessarily smokers themselves.

Aim

The aim of this study is to evaluate empathy and the psychological characteristics of Greek smokers.

Methodology

For research purposes we used questionnaires Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ), Symptom Check list 90-R, Experience of Shame Scale (EES) and Other As Shamer Scale- OAS.

Results

A statistically significant difference has been observed in the TEQ at the factor 3, which measures the empathy in smokers and non smokers, and shows lower levels of empathy in smokers.

Do you smoke?
Yes No

<i>Do you smoke in public places?</i>	N	Mean	S.D.
yes	28	2.9	0.5
no	11	3.3	0.4

In addition, we observe a significant difference in the question “do you feel nervous or inner trembling” between smokers and non smokers.

Discussion

Despite the levels of empathy in smokers are larger than average, their smoking behavior in public places remains high. Smoking is associated with stress, fatigue, despair and mainly for "heavy" smokers (30 <cigarettes / day) the probability of anxiety display is increased .Finally, smoking is associatedwith psychiatric symptoms such as high levels of anxiety disorders, depression, poor physical condition.

Conclusions

The sample consisted of 81 subjects, 39 smokers and 42 non smokers (48,15% and 51,85%).Of smokers, 71.7% stated that smoke in public areas. From the results of our research we observe that smokers exhibit moderate to low empathy and high levels of anxiety disorders. The educational leveland gender of the participants do not seem to play a significant role in empathy and psychopathology of smokers.

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