Letter to the Editor

Does awareness on health hazards of tobacco use promote quit attempt? An observational study from urban Pondicherry

Sir,

Tobacco use is the most prevalent behavioural risk factors for non-communicable diseases. Globally, 1 billion smokers are estimated to add up to current (2012) 1 billion smokers by 2025 with the current trend of tobacco use (The Tobacco Atlas, 2002). The mortality due to tobacco use is estimated to increase from 6 million in 2015 to nearly 8 million a year by 2030.¹ National level reports from India showed moderate decrease in prevalence of smoking but increase in prevalence of smokeless tobacco use.

In India, about two third of the tobacco users are aware of health hazards related to tobacco use.² People with knowledge on health hazard of tobacco use are less likely to use tobacco. Knowledge on health effects of tobacco use shows positive correlation with intention to quit.³ People who perceive that tobacco is damaging their health are more likely to quit than those who don’t perceive that way.⁴

Majority (64.4%, 58/90) of the current smokers were aware of health hazards related to tobacco use. However, 3 out of 58 tobacco users could not name any health hazards despite being aware that tobacco is harmful. Most common response on health hazards of tobacco use was cancers followed by breathlessness. Nearly one third of the tobacco users had attempted tobacco quit. Tobacco quit attempt recorded to be significantly (p value < 0.05) higher among people who were aware of health hazards of tobacco use (50%, 29/58) than the people who were not aware of health hazards (12.5%, 4/32). The reasons cited for failed quit attempt were stress (4 individuals), peer pressure (4 individuals). Others reasons given were craving for tobacco, reeling of head after quiting, feeling uncomfortable and free time.

Garg et al and Naik et al also recorded similar health hazard awareness among tobacco users.⁵ ⁶ Our study record significantly higher quit attempts among people who were aware of health hazards of tobacco use. Most of the failed quit attempts were related to personal level factors. Hence, creating awareness on health hazards and providing personalized counselling services to address reasons for failed quit attempt will improve the successful quitting of tobacco use.

Thank you.

Bijaya N. Naik¹*, Sitanshu S. Kar¹, Marie G. Majella¹
Parthibane S.²

¹Department of PSM, JIPMER, Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu, India
²Department of Epidemiology, NIMHANS, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

*Correspondence to:
Dr. Bijaya N. Naik,
E-mail: drnbbijaya@gmail.com
REFERENCES

1. Mathers CD, Loncar D. Projections of Global Mortality and Burden of Disease from 2002 to 2030. Plos Med. 2006;3:e442.
2. Mishra GA, Pimple SA, Shastri SS. An overview of the tobacco problem in India. Indian J Med Paediatr Oncol. 2012;33:139–45.
3. Raute LJ, Sansone G, Pednekar MS, Fong GT, Gupta PC, Quah ACK, et al. Knowledge of health effects and intentions to quit among smokeless tobacco users in India: findings from the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation (ITC) India Pilot Survey. Asian Pac J Cancer Prev Apjcp. 2011;12:1233–8.
4. Surani NS, Gupta PC, Fong TG, Pednekar MS, Quah AC, Bansal-Travers M. Intention to quit among Indian tobacco users: findings from International Tobacco Control Policy evaluation India pilot survey. Indian J Cancer. 2012;49:431–7.
5. Garg A, Singh MM, Gupta VK, Garg S, Daga MK, Saha R. Prevalence and correlates of tobacco smoking, awareness of hazards, and quitting behavior among persons aged 30 years or above in a resettlement colony of Delhi, India. Lung India. 2012;29:336–40.
6. Naik S, Patil S, Kamble S, Khan M. Awareness about Tobacco Habit, Its Hazards and Willingness to Quit the Habit among Patients. J Med Dental Sci. 2013;3:27–31.
7. Srivastava S, Malhotra S, Harries AD, Lal P, Arora M. Correlates of tobacco quit attempts and cessation in the adult population of India: secondary analysis of the Global Adult Tobacco Survey, 2009-10. BMC Public Health. 2013;13:263.
8. Santhanakrishnan I, Kar SS, Kumar SG. Prevalence of tobacco use among adults in Ramanathapuram village of Pondicherry. Int J Med Public Heal. 2014;4:298-300.

Cite this article as: Naik BN, Kar SS, Majella MG, Parthibane S. Does awareness on health hazards of tobacco use promote quit attempt? An observational study from urban Pondicherry. Int J Community Med Public Health 2017;4:1787-8.