



TOBACCO SMOKING, INTENTION TO QUIT AND ITS ASSOCIATED FACTORS

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Abstract

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable mortality worldwide. Tobacco smoking builds up high levels of Carbon Monoxide (CO) in the blood which is exhaled in expired breath. Measurement of CO levels in expired air (BCO) helps to monitor the severity of tobacco smoking. The aims of the present study were to determine the level of smoking, the smokers' perceptions of current smoke-free policies, intention to quit and its associated factors among current male adult tobacco smokers. Smokers aged 21-56 years were randomly selected from the peri-urban areas of Colombo district. Details of smoking were collected by an interviewer-administered questionnaire and Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS II) questionnaire. BCO and Carboxyhaemoglobin (COHb%) were measured using a portable Smokerlyzer (Bedfont Inc.UK) and compared with age-matched nonsmoking males (n=30). 75 smokers were studied. Mean age of smokers were 43.5±9.6 years. Mean age of commencing smoking was 19.4±4.06 years. Daily tobacco smoking frequency was 7.3±4.6 cigarettes/ day, and the mean duration of smoking was 19.3±13.3 years. The mean BCO level of the smokers, 12.28±7.48 ppm was significantly higher than the non-smokers 1.87±0.63, ($p<.001$). The mean COHb% level of the smokers 2.60±1.23% was significantly higher than non-smokers 0.96 ±0.11%, ($p<.001$). Daily consumption of tobacco smoke was positively correlated with levels of BCO ($r=0.446$, $p<.001$) and COHb% ($r=0.480$, $p<.001$). Duration of smoking was also positively associated with BCO ($r=0.355$, $p=.002$) and COHb% levels ($r=0.47$, $p<.001$). Majority of smokers (68%, n=51) had made attempts to quit by themselves, however, had not been successful. Additionally, 36% (n=27) of smokers had met primary care doctors during the past 12 months; however, among them, only 22.2% (n=6) had received advice to quit smoking. Furthermore, all had seen pictorial warnings on cigarette packets while 46.7% (n=35) mentioned that it made a positive impact on their attitudes to think about quitting smoking. 25.3% (n=19) had observed promotional methods launched by cigarette companies within the last 12 months. In conclusion, there is a strong need for essential strategies to motivate smokers to quit smoking.

Keywords: CO, COHb, quit