

Smokeless Tobacco among Sistan-Balouchestan University Students: A Cross Sectional Study in Iran

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Background : That is well known tobacco is a major preventable cause of morbidity and mortality. Use of smokeless tobacco such as paan, gutka and tumbaku is common in South and Southeast Asia but not in Iran and it is not considered as a normal cultural habit. It seems this habit is one of the most problematic affairs in countries without this practice. With this background, this study was conducted with the objective of determining the prevalence of smokeless tobacco among Iranian university students.

Methods : A cross sectional study was carried out in five colleges of Sistan-Balouchestan University - East province of Iran. 354 students selected by convenient sampling completed a peer reviewed, pre-tested, self- administered questionnaire. Questions were asked regarding lifetime use (at least once or twice in their life), current use (at least once in the last 30 days), and established use (more than 100 times in their life) of smokeless tobacco. Chi square and logistic regression analyses were used.

Results : One hundred and forty six (41.2%) students had used tobacco in some form (smoked or smokeless) in their lifetime. Twenty two (6.1%) students were lifetime users of smokeless tobacco. Ten (2.8%) were daily users while 5 (1.4%) fulfilled the criterion for established users. Paan was the most commonly used form of smokeless tobacco followed by nass. Most paan users belonged to Engineering while most nass users studied in Psychology. On univariate analysis, lifetime use of smokeless tobacco showed significant associations with the use of cigarettes, student gender (M > F), individual position (native > guest) and kind of the College (Engineering > Psychology). Multivariate analysis showed independent association of lifetime use of smokeless tobacco with concomitant cigarette smoking, student gender and kind of the college.

Conclusion : The use of smokeless tobacco among students doesn't have to be ignored. The governments should add prevent smokeless tobacco to existing law against cigarette smoking. Universities also have to provide greater education about the myths and hazards of smokeless tobacco.