

2nd World Congress on

Public Health & Nutrition

March 22-23, 2017 | Rome, Italy

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH FEMALE SMOKING AT SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN DHAKA

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Background: While smoking prevalence is generally higher among males, the rate of increase among female smokers is a cause for concern. In developed countries more young women than young men smoke. Up till now, very little is known about the pattern and prevalence of smoking in general and specifically among the young adults in Bangladesh who are the target of the expanding tobacco market.

Objective: This study was conducted to identify the factors influencing smoking among young female students in five universities in Dhaka city.

Method: Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted for this study. A total of 1,003 representative female students were interviewed from five selected universities using a semi-structured questionnaire for quantitative approach and also five in-depth interviews were conducted in the same area. All the respondents were full-time students of the five selected educational institutions. Univariate analysis was done to find out the proportion of variables and bivariate analysis was done to find out the association between dependent and independent variables.

Results: The prevalence of female smoking was 10.1%, and a majority (92.1%) was daily smokers. Curiosity (57.4 %), frustration (41.6%) and desire to fit in with friends (13.9%) were the factors influencing female smoking. Among the smokers, a majority started their smoking after enrolling into the university while a little over one-quarter of smokers started before university enrollment. Almost all the female respondents have knowledge about harmful effects of smoking. It was also found that smoking among female students was significantly associated with their age group, type of institution, and educational level ($p < 0.001$) were significantly associated with their practice of smoking.

Conclusion: The study results suggest that the number of female smokers at the university level is increasing as compared to studies documented elsewhere although the students claim to have a sound knowledge of the harmful effects of smoking. Factors associated with smoking are the age group, type of university, monthly family and personal income, the presence of smoker family member and friends. Successful public health approach toward tobacco control should be concurrent to control of smoke with female smoking is necessary to reduce tobacco use among female students.

Biography

Tanmoy Sana is a student of Masters of Public Health in Daffodil International University, Bangladesh. He has done his MS in Pharmaceutical Science from Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka.

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