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TOBACCO USE AMONG LONG ROUTE BUS DRIVERS AND STAFFS OF DHARAN, EASTERN NEPAL: A KAP STUDY

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Introduction: Tobacco use (smoking and smokeless) remains a major cause of preventable deaths worldwide. WHO estimated that about 25% of Nepalese population smokes. In Nepal it is widely believed that smoking and smokeless tobacco use among bus drivers and staffs is very high.

Objectives: The main objectives of the study were to estimate the prevalence, assess the knowledge, attitude and practice regarding tobacco use among bus drivers and staffs.

Materials and Methods: A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted in Dharan bus station among 300 bus drivers and staffs of long route bus service fulfilling the inclusion criteria and they voluntarily responded with self-administered questionnaire.

Results: It was observed that the prevalence of tobacco consumption among the responders (96.3%) widely varied with prevalence among other study groups. More than half (52%) of the tobacco users initiated the use of tobacco at the age of less than 18 years. 'Peer pressure', 'influenced by smoking habit of family member(s) or relative(s)' were the main reasons for initiation while 'like the intoxicated feeling' (67.5%), 'Feeling Mature' and 'relief from stress' were the reasons for using tobacco. Concurrent use of alcohol or illicit drug was also noted in 70% of the tobacco users. 97% of the responders claimed they knew about the injurious effect of tobacco use, diseases cited being respiratory, cancer and cardiac, but only 48.9% knew this before initiating its use. A 90% of them would not have used tobacco if they had prior knowledge of its injurious effects and 95% of current tobacco users would like to seek medical help in quitting tobacco if available. More than three fourth of tobacco consumers (75.8 %) had tried to quit it, among whom two third had tried more than 4 times. The main reason for quitting attempt was due to 'health issue' (65.3%) followed by 'Pressure from family member/s', 'Economic burden' and 'not liking use'. Among those who tried only about 20% succeeded in quitting its use. The main reason for failure was feeling of addiction (69.7%). Increasing age, tobacco consuming peers, smoking habit of family members/relatives, nicotine dependence and fashion were seen to have directly associated with tobacco consumption.

Conclusion: Our study concluded that the prevalence of tobacco consumption among bus drivers and staffs was very high compared to any other study groups. Government policies to ban free sale of tobacco to minor age group, on tobacco advertisement and promotion though have been amended in law, are the issues to be properly as well as strictly implemented. Targeted programs such as nicotine replacement clinics would be highly effective for such vulnerable group with desire to quit tobacco use with medical help.

Biography

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