

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SMOKING AMONG ADOLESCENTS AGED FROM 14 TO 18 IN THE CITY OF ELBASAN

Saimir Bakalli

Department Psychology-Pedagogy UT

E-mail: saimirbakalli@gmail.com

Abstract

The study includes the target group of teenagers in a geographic location which includes: high schools and middle schools downtown and in the suburbs, including roma students living and studying in the suburbs. This is performed to detect a tendency to this target group. In addition to the expansion within the city it is also conducted surveys in the area of Belësh, which cultivates tobacco trade. This stretch is performed to detect where lays the larger trend. In addition to young people in the study is also included the school psychologists, teachers, principals and parents.

The results of this study trend to show increasing number of smokers. Thus the data results show that 20% of the group ages 17 - 18 year olds are smoking consumers. Only 12% of the group ages 14 - 16 years old are smokers. These statistics are within the city whereas in Belësh the group ages of 17 - 18 year olds are only 20%. All respondents claim to have smoking companionship. School psychologists rank among the main factors the close impacts to 60% of cases and 40% over identity crisis. They all claim that tobacco is consumed on school premises. Psychologists claim that males consume the most. In their opinion the number of young smokers is always increasing. In most cases interviews of academic staff show that they assert the claims of psychologists. While interviews with parents highlight the help that they need to find ways of solving this problem. Where professionals can turn to for help!

Keywords: *Adolescence, smoking, damage, parents, law.*

Introduction

If a conflict would be developed between states would be called war, if somewhere in the sea oil would be spilled then would be called a natural disaster. This is neither a war nor a natural disaster, but it is a silent killer that poisons every day the Albanian society. This killer is smoking, from all ages, sexes, classes and cultures. It is exactly this phenomenon of today's youth that is growing every day more and more towards tobacco consumption.

This study provides a clear perspective of what is happening with young people. Smoking has become a normal phenomenon, but the damage brought is avoided or rather not evaluated. In many young people exists the perception that a cigarette is nothing, but they do not know that after a cigarette comes another and then another, and this is how starts regular consumption.

Work that needs to be done with young people is of particular importance. It belongs to the social services professionals to deal more with these young people today so will not be too late tomorrow!

Material and methods

Hometown of tobacco is America . There are about 75 types of tobacco. In Europe, the first tobacco cultivators have been Spaniards, since 1555, in San Domingo. Because of Spain it was transported across Europe. The use of tobacco dates around the XVII century.

Teenagers who have more predispositions to initiate tobacco consumption are those who do not believe in the negative health consequences that come from smoking, show that have positive effects of smoking. So with the increasing level of addiction, the reasons for smoking become more personal and less social. Teenagers are not as aware as adults are for the risks of smoking.¹

However the greatest damages are caused in the cardiovascular blood system. Tobacco is held as one of the key factors in Atherosclerosis vase damages (the narrowing of blood vessels), which in itself causes ischemic heart disease, heart attack, nervous breakdown, as well as the damage of many other organs.²

So smoking in our country is estimated to be at higher levels than in the countries of the European Union, while a serious concern is the growing number of young people who smoke. According to the study of IPH, smoking in the country is estimated at 39%, compared with 28.6% in the European Union countries. Based on data from studies that IPH conducted with students of seventh and eighth grade in 9-year schools and high schools (first and second year), shows that about 16% of students are tobacco users, while 16.7% of those who did not smoke, think to start in the upcoming year.

It often happens that children and adolescents become prey to seduction by different people interested in the sale of tobacco, without thinking of the risk. So, IPH specialists claim that in this group, unfortunately, are also included some of the parents, teachers and others who smoke in front of children, especially at home, in the family. "Unfortunately, over 8 in 10 students live in homes where others smoke in their presence, over nine in ten are exposed to smoking in public places, while almost half of the students have smoker parents "say experts, adding that on the other hand, young people and teenagers think that smoking is less harmful than other vices and a pack of cigarettes does not bring any significant damage. Specialists PHI claim that the age when one starts smoking, is usually adolescence, but in many cases, under the conditions, may start earlier.³

In terms of the study's methodology it is a mixture of qualitative and quantitative study. Target group of the surveyed adolescents is 200 while the interviews are four, which have lasted 45 minutes and were then transcribed. Instruments applied by school psychologists are qualitative and are 6 instruments applied. In addition, this instrument is also applied to the principal and school teachers in Belësh.

¹ Johnston et. al, 2007; Health Facts, 2009, p-15

² Journal of Public Health; Publication of the Health Ministry; No. 5

³ <http://www.ishp.gov.al>

Questions raised in this study are: Family model, social and mass media shape the behavior of adolescent smokers. The number of smokers is growing in males. Lack of therapeutics aid brings agitation to the situation. The purpose of the study was: To measure the number of smokers in the city of Elbasan. Identification of family and social model impact on young people. Observation of where stood the tendency to consume more, in the center of the city schools or in the suburbs. The objectives of the study were: The negative effects of smoking. The link of family and social model to the tendency of starting smoking. Cases identified by school psychologists and academic staff of how much have they made to improve the situation.

Regarding the construction of instruments they are built with short and clear statements. At first they were built on the basis of certain criteria and then were piloted. The instrument applied to the target group of adolescents is composed of nine open and closed questions. This instrument is applied in high schools and nine year middle schools. Geographical area has also included Belësh, which is a tobacco cultivation area. In addition, this instrument is also applied to schools in the provinces of the city that have a large number of Rom students. The second instrument is the one applied with school psychologists which are only six psychologists for all city schools. The instrument developed consists of seven open and closed questions.

The purpose of the instruments was explained to the subjects in advance, then was followed by an explanation of confidentiality and how should be completed. Questionnaires can be administered simultaneously at several subjects in the same environment while maintaining a personal space. While with the academic staff, psychologists and interviews with parents were conducted individually.

Results

The data shows that 12% of the age group from 14 to 16 years old in the city of Elbasan is tobacco consumer. Damages caused from tobacco are cancer claim 60% and 40% claim that damages the lungs. The knowledge of law remains in very low levels. From data results in the area of Belësh 44% of the respondents in this group age claimed that law exists, while 56% claimed that it does not exist. While in the city of Elbasan 30% of this group age claimed that there is a law, while 70% claimed that there is no law. Regarding to family model 36% of respondents have parents who are tobacco consumers while 64% have no consumer parents.

In the area of Belshit 32% of this group age have parents who are tobacco consumers, while 58% of them do not have parents who consume tobacco. Social model shows that 54% of them have friends who consume tobacco, while 46% have not. While in Elbasan respondents who were consumers claimed that use the money that parents give them for breakfast. Regarding to social model in this group age 60% had smoking society while 40% claimed that do not have.

In the group age from 17 to 18 years old in the city of Elbasan 20% are tobacco consumers while 80% are not consumers. These statistics are also true for the area of Belshit. The place where they consume more is in the bar claimed 76% of them, 8% claimed in the street, 8% claimed in the neighborhood and also in the house. They also list a number of damages that caused by smoking, 38% claim that damages health, 42% claim that causes cancer, 20% claim that causes lung damages. 40% of the respondents argue that there is a law that prohibits smoking, while 60% claim that there is no such

law. Family model resulted in 46% who have parents who smoke, while 54% claimed that they have non smoking parents. As for the money to buy cigarettes they confess that they use the money that their parents give them for school. In this group age social model showed that 98% of them have friends who are consumers of smoking and only 2% have friends who are non smokers. While in the area of Belësh statistics indicate otherwise. Thus, the data showed that 60% have friends who smoke while 40% claimed that they have friends that do not smoke.

The applied instrument with school psychologists results that for the identified cases is carried out by their advice. While the principal has given out warning messages to expel and the teacher has called the parents in most cases. Among the key factors for smoking initiation is that in 60% of cases is the close influence and in 40% the transition over identity crisis. Psychologists say that tobacco is consumed on the school environment. The gender which consumes more is males. In their opinion the number of young consumers is always increasing. As for parents who seek help only 25% of them are concerned for their children, while 75% are not interested. Other instances that cooperate with them are the Faculty of Nursing “Elena Gjika” in Elbasan and OJF.

The applied instrument with 9-year school principal “Halit Uruçi” Belësh expresses for the found cases. He states that the held position was critical to the behavior but also to the student. The decision taken was note of break in behavior. As a key factor in smoking consummation ranks the transition over identity crisis "Now I'm an adult". He claims that in the school environment tobacco is not consumed and gender which consumes it the most are males. Cooperation is continuous with the police and also with the public health.

The applied instrument with the teacher asserts that the case which she has been encountered she had talked about why he made such a move. After that she contacted the family. While from the principal a meeting was held with the management staff of discipline. Factors that influence smoking in its opinion is the closely impact. She states that on the school environment smoke is not consumed. Based on her point of view the gender which uses more tobacco are males. The number of smokers is increasing. She says that parents are concerned regarding to the need of help. While instances that collaborate are different social centers.

A 19-year-old boy conducted a interview claiming that he does not consume tobacco. He was from the village Rrasë who completed only high school in Belësh. His family cultivates tobacco but he and his family do not consume it. He says that his friends in Rrasë do not smoke whereas his friends in high school in Belësh did smoke cigarettes. While a man claims with pride that he does not consume smoking. His children smoke and society has influenced in the beginning. Today are totally dependent on him. The man tells that at his time young people could not consume tobacco, they did not dare to, because very serious actions were taken. He says that it should be done more so young people can recognize the damages from smoking. Information about damages is entirely missing.

Interview is made with a lady who has Rome origin and tells about her son who is 16 years old and has begun to consume tobacco. The boy has completed only 9-years of school. He does not do anything. Friends have taught him into smoking. The lady says that does not give money to him, she rarely gives him any 50 cents to eat something. When her husband found out was extremely upset and started to yell, but the boy was not

disturbed at all by saying that he can not quit now because he likes it. He does not listen to his mother and she worries about him.

The interview was done by a lady who has three sons. Her son has started to consume cigarettes at the first year of high school. "He began to like himself" she said. At that time he smoked a cigarette secretly while now days he holds the package all the time. In the beginning he was afraid of his parents but when they found out then the boy became fearless. "My son is trying to quit smoking because he tells me that am not good for him and I hope he quits as soon as possible!"

Discussion

During this study it is demonstrated a tendency in tobacco consumption among males who accept it more openly, whereas in females this phenomenon is less publicly accepted because of many reasons. Although at a free glance in public places we will see a trend that apparently prevails among women after the age of 20 who start and consume cigarettes without any problem. Does the perception start from the fact that now we are adults and it can be proved in the same way that happens with adolescent males? Or do we have to do with the simple fact that parents do not control them anymore when they are graduated from high school?

Family and social model plays an important role in the initiative of cigarette and its regular consumption. Often parents advise their children to quit tobacco or to not start it but these parents are consumers themselves. A proverb says that "Do not do as I do but do as I say" so that the change should be first initiated from the parents and then from the children. Regarding to the social model it remains the one that weights the most in this direction. A teenager even though may not be a consumer many times falls prey of friends who smoke which puts peer pressure on him to try just one cigarette. Should this change?

Conclusions

Teenagers who smoke compared to those who are not smokers, are likely to have a friend or many friends who smoke. They also are more likely to think that smokers have more friends. (CDC, 2006b) Peer influence appears to have a significant importance especially in the early stages of smoking. A study has shown that more than half of the cases the first cigarette ignition in adolescents, comes from the pressure of a friend in the same age or from a close friend.⁴

The data shows that 12% of the group ages from 14 to 16 years old are tobacco consumers. Knowing the law is in very low levels. Regarding to family model it is shown that 36% of respondents have parents who are tobacco consumers, while 64% do not have parents who consume tobacco. Social model showed that 54% of them have friends who consume tobacco, while 46% do not.

In the group age from 17 to 18 years old it is shown that 20% are tobacco consumers while 80% are not consumers. Family model showed that 46% have parents who smoke, while 54% claimed that do not have parents who smoke. As for the money to buy cigarettes they claim that parents provide them money when they give them money for school. In this group age the social model showed that 98% of them have friends who are

⁴ Health Facts, 2009, p-17

smokers and only 2% had non smoker friends. While in the area of Belshit statistics are different. Thus, the data showed that 60% have friend who smoke, while 40% claimed that they do not have smoker friends.

School psychologists rank among the main factors for smoking initiation that in 60% of cases is influenced by closely impact and 40% them from the transition over identity crisis. They claim that tobacco is consumed on the school environment. Psychologists claim that the gender which consumes the more is males. In their opinion the number of young smokers is always increasing.

A parent from Belësh says that it should be done more, so young people can recognize the damages from smoking. Information about these damages are entirely missing. Whereas another parent wishes that her son quits smoking because it is not good for him. The lady also adds that her husband has been a consumer since the age of ten.

References

- Assembly of the Republic of Albania (2006) Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania, no. 124
- Adolescent Decision Making: Implications for Prevention Programs: Summary of a Workshop Baruch Fischhoff, Nancy A. Crowell, and Michele Kipke, Editors; Board on Children, Youth, and Families
- Adolescent Risk and Vulnerability: Concepts and Measurement Baruch Fischhoff, Elena O. Nightingale, Joah G. Iannotta, Editors, Board on Children, Youth, and Families
- Clearing the Smoke: Assessing the Science Base for Tobacco Harm Reduction Kathleen Stratton, Padma Shetty, Robert Wallace, and Stuart Bondurant, Editors, Committee to Assess the Science Base for Tobacco Harm Reduction, Board on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- Consumption / Symptoms / Problems / Dependence / Euphoria / Tips / Help / Smoking Publishing House "Peggy" July 2003
- Ending the Tobacco Problem: A Blueprint for the Nation Richard J. Bonnie, Kathleen Stratton, and Robert B. Wallace, Editors, Committee on Reducing Tobacco Use: Strategies, Barriers, and Consequences
- Growing Up Tobacco Free: Preventing Nicotine Addiction in Children and Youths Barbara S. Lynch and Richard J. Bonnie, Editors; Committee on Preventing Nicotine Addiction in Children and Youths
- Health Facts. Smoking Nora J. Krantzler PhD, MPH William M. Kane PhD, CHES Dragash, Pristina-Kosovo, 2009
- Healthy People 2000: Citizens Chart the Course Michael A. Stoto, Ruth Behrens, and Connie Rosemont, Editors
- Journal of Public Health; Publication of the Health Ministry; No. 5
- Losing Generations: Adolescents in High-Risk Settings Panel on High-Risk Youth
- Premature Death in the New Independent States Jose Luis Bobadilla, Christine A. Costello, and Faith Mitchell, Editors; Committee on Population

- Risks and Opportunities: Synthesis of Studies on Adolescence Michele D. Kipke, Editor; Forum on Adolescence, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine
- <http://www.ishp.gov.al>