

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office on Smoking and Health (CDC-OSH) US, jointly developed the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), to track tobacco use among the youth, in countries across the world using a common methodology and core questionnaire. GYTS is a school-based survey designed to use a two-stage cluster sample, to produce representative data on smoking among school children aged, 13 – 15 years. In Kenya the target group was identified as students attending primary and secondary schools in standard 7, 8, forms 1 and 2. Data collected include the prevalence of cigarette smoking and other tobacco use, access and availability of tobacco products, knowledge and attitudes, exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), cessation, media advertising and the school curriculum.

GYTS in Kenya was conducted in October 2001. The Executing Agency was the National Referral and Teaching Psychiatric Hospital, Mathari. A two-stage cluster sample design was used to produce a representative sample. All public primary and secondary school with students, aged 13 to 15 years, and having an enrolment of over 40 students, were included in the sampling frame. Twenty-five schools were selected in Nairobi, which is the capital city. Six schools selected in Mombasa, which is an urban area with a strong influence from tourism. Twenty-four schools were selected from the rest of the country, representing mainly a rural setting

All the fifty-five schools selected, participated in the survey, and gave a school response rate of 100 %. Among the 4,581 students sampled, 4,447 responded to the questionnaire, giving a student response rate of 97.1 %. The overall response rate was 97.1%. During analysis, a weighting factor was used to reflect the likelihood of sampling each student and to reduce bias by compensating for differing patterns of non-response. Smoking prevalence rate of students who had ever smoked even one puff was 27.3% in Nairobi, while the average for the whole country was 14.8%. It was found that 16.9 % of all the students were currently using some tobacco product and of these, 8.7 % were smoking cigarettes while 9.9 % used other types of tobacco products. It is estimated that 19.6 % of students, who had never smoked, were likely to initiate smoking the following year. 48% of current smokers and 18% of non-smokers had objects with cigarette brand logos. Below 50 % of the students had been taught in class about the dangers of smoking and causes of smoking by their peers.

An effective Tobacco use prevention school curriculum is necessary, to enhance the Youth Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Program. Tobacco control legislation is also required to protect non-smokers especially children and adolescents from the harmful health effects of environmental tobacco smoke also known as second-hand-smoking, by banning smoking in public places. Media advertising of cigarettes and other forms of tobacco should also be restricted while promoting counter-tobacco use advertising and campaigns.