

### **Executive Summary**

The Oman Global Youth Tobacco Survey (Oman-GYTS) is first national survey which aims to monitor trends of tobacco use among young people in Oman periodically. It describes knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of youth regarding tobacco use in its many forms including Shishah and smokeless tobacco, exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), tobacco industry advertisements as well as counter-tobacco advertisements. In addition it attempts to gauge the extent to which youth receive health education regarding tobacco control in schools.

A two stage cluster sampling was employed across all government administered schools throughout the Sultanate. 1,962 young people aged 13-15 years had participated (1036 boys and 926 girls). A self-administered standardized multiple choice questionnaire was distributed to all students and answer sheet was collected at the end of a 45 minute period. The overall response rate was 96.6%.

One in five students ever smoked cigarettes in their lifetime, with the majority being boys (31.4%). One in five students (18.2%) is a current user of any tobacco product with 16% of boys and 2% of girls being hooked on cigarettes. The survey also shows the emerging epidemic of water-pipes, the use of which was alarmingly high (17% among boys and 3% among girls). In addition over 15% of boys and 3% of girls use smokeless chewing tobacco. The majority of students who smoked expressed their desire to stop (78%) with 67% of them have actually tried to stop this year.

The great majority of smokers (81%) and one third of never-smoker (27%) stated that they were widely exposed to environmental tobacco smoke (also know as passive smoking). Interestingly, the overwhelming majority (86%) of the students sampled expressed their desire that smoking should be banned from public places.

Regarding students attitudes, nearly one third to one half of students thought that boys and girls who smoke have more friends or look more attractive; these were more strongly believed by smoker students than no-smokers.

Three in four students stated that they saw pro-tobacco messages in newspapers and magazine. One in three girls and one in 10 boys had an object with a cigarette brand logo on it and a similar percentage was offered free cigarettes by the tobacco company representative.

Despite a law which bans the sell of cigarettes to youth under 18 years, the vast majority (86%) of smoker were not refused buying tobacco from stores.

The GYTS of Oman clearly illustrates the urgent need to curb the tobacco epidemic in Oman with a comprehensive tobacco control law against the

## **The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS – Oman)**

---

unleashed vengeance of tobacco companies and the need for further allocation of human and financial resources to combat the scourge of this 20-century man-made.