

II. Knowledge and attitude towards smoking

Total

86.3% of the non-smokers answered “No” when asked if they would definitely not smoke if their best friend offered them a cigarette. So 13.7% is not sure but only 0.5% admits that they will maybe smoke and 0.1% admits that will smoke if their best friend offered them a cigarette. A simple calculation shows us that 13.7% of this group has not given a clear “No” to this question and they can therefore be labeled as belonging to the group of smokers.

In order to obtain a clear picture as to whether the youth in Suriname receives the necessary information at home with regard to the harmful consequences of smoking, the following question was asked: “Has a family member ever discussed the harmful consequences of smoking with you?” 72.4% of the non-smokers group answered ‘yes’ which means that 27.6% does not receive information at home. From where, then, do they get the motivation not to smoke? There is a possibility that smoking is not being discussed within the family because no one smokes and the problem therefore never presented itself. It is striking, however, that among the group of smokers, the same percentage (73.0%) received information at home from a family member about the harmful consequences. This means that 27% did receive information but it has had no effect on their smoking habit. If the information given at home had the same effect on the smokers as on the non-smokers, we can assume that this information was not given professionally enough.

Table 4. Questions with regard to knowledge and attitude towards smoking

Questions	Smokers (%) “Yes”	Non-smokers (%) “Yes”
Has a family member ever discussed the harmful consequences of smoking with you?	73.0	72.4
Is it difficult for someone to stop smoking?	36.5	38.0

That information is lacking is clear from the fact that only 38.0% and 36.5% of the non-smokers and the smokers group respectively, are convinced that it is difficult to stop once someone starts smoking. 86.4% of the group of non-smokers indicates that they will not smoke during the next 12 months. 0.8% indicates that they might smoke and 0.5% is definitely convinced to smoke within the next 12 months. We see once again that within this group of non-smokers, surely a tenth (13.6%) are potential smokers (see table 5). When asked “Did you already smoke before the age of 10?”, 19.0% answered ‘yes’. So almost a fifth of the group of young people in Suriname start smoking before the age of 10! This is an alarming fact!

Table 5: The percentage of students who will or will not smoke within the next 12 months

Definitely not	86.4
Possibly not	12.3
Possible	0.8
Definitely	0.5
Total	100

Gender

To the question put to non-smokers as to whether they would definitely not smoke if their best friend offered them a cigarette, 83.7% of the boys and 88.1% of the girls answered “No”. So girls are firmer in their decision not to smoke than boys. This impression was also given when the question was asked, “Would you smoke if your best friend offered you a cigarette?” 0.7% of the boys and 0.4% of the girls answered ‘yes’. Still, 0.2% of the girls confirms that they will smoke if they were offered a cigarette by their best friend. There are no boys who confirmed this. A simple calculation shows us that 16.3% of the boys and 11.9% of the girls has not answered this question with a firm “No” so that they can be labeled as belonging to the group of smokers in future.

In order to obtain a picture of the youth in Suriname as to whether they are receiving necessary information at home with regard to the harmful consequences of smoking, the following question was asked: “Has a family member ever discussed the harmful consequences with you?”. From the group of non-smokers, 74.3% of the boys and 71.5% of the girls answered “yes”. So 25.7% of the boys and 28.5% of the girls do not receive information at home. It is striking, however, that among the group of smokers, more girls (74.6%) than boys (71.0%) received information from a family member at home with regard to the harmful consequences of smoking. So more boys than girls indicate to receive the defects in question, still, the number of boys smoking is larger.

From the group of non-smokers and smokers among boys, only 36.2% and 37.25% respectively are convinced that it is difficult to stop once someone starts smoking. Among girls the percentages are 39.1% (among the non-smokers) and 35.5% (among the smokers). 85.4% of the group of non-smokers among boys and 87.2% of the group of non-smokers among girls indicate that they will also not smoke during the next 12 months. 0.7% of these boys and 0.9% of these girls are definitely convinced that they will smoke within the next 12 months. We once again see that, among the group of non-smokers, at least a tenth (14.6% of the boys and 12.8% of the girls) are potential smokers. When asked “Did you already smoke before the age of 10?”, 18.7% of the boys and 18.0% of the girls answered “yes”. So, both boys and girls start to smoke at a young age!

Schools

The largest group which answered “No” to the question addressed to the non-smoking group as to whether they would definitely not smoke if they were offered a cigarette by their best friend, were the MULO students (89.6%) and the smallest group that of the ETO students (71.4%). The percentages for LBG0 and LTS were 79.9 and 86.5%.

MULO students (0.8%) answered “yes”. Still, only the LBGO students (0.4%) confirm that they will smoke if their best friend offers them a cigarette. There are no other students who confirm this. In order to obtain a picture of whether Surinamese youth receives necessary information at home with regard to the harmful effects of smoking, the following question was asked: “Has a family member ever discussed the harmful consequences of smoking with you?”. From the non-smoking group, the MULO, LBGO, LTS and ETO students, 75.5, 64.2, 80.0 and 53.9% respectively, answered “Yes”. So, 46.1% of the ETO group does not receive information. It is striking that this is also the largest group (72.1%) that has experimented with smoking.

Of the non-smokers and the smokers at MULO, only 40.2 and 34.5% respectively, were convinced that it is difficult to stop once someone starts smoking. Among the LBGO students, the percentages are 34.3% (for the non-smokers) and 38.4% (for the smokers). The numbers of the LTS and the ETO students are too small to provide a reliable result.

89.6% of the group of non-smokers among MULO students and 79.9% of the non-smokers among the ETO students indicate that will not smoke during the next 12 months as well. Here as well, it is clear, that the ETO students are more willing to smoke since 20.1% gave an unsure answer. 0.9% of both MULO and LBGO students indicate that they may possibly smoke while 0.9% of the MULO students are definitely convinced that they will smoke during the next 12 months. To the question “Did you already smoke before the age of 10?”, 18.8% and 18.2% of the LBGO students answered “Yes”.

Age group

To the question put amongst non-smokers as to whether they would definitely not smoke when offered a cigarette by their best friend, there was no clear difference in answer among the groups. The percentages of students age 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, which answered with “No” were 86.5, 87.1, 87.8, 85.7 and 86.8% respectively. It is striking though that 2.2% of the students age 14 and 0.5% of the students age 15, reacted positively to the question “Will you maybe smoke if your best friend offered you a cigarette?” Still, only the group age 15 (0.5%) confirmed that they will smoke if their best friend offered them a cigarette. There are no other students who confirm this.

In order to obtain a picture of whether the youth in Suriname receives necessary information at home of a family member with regard to the harmful effects of smoking the following question was asked “Has a family member ever discussed the harmful effects of smoking with you?” From the non-smoking group age 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, the percentages 78.2%, 79.0%, 68.9% and 71.4% respectively, answered with “Yes”. So, 31.1% of the youngsters age 15 do not receive information.

From the non-smoking and the smoking group age 12, only 34.4 and 40.3% respectively were convinced that it is difficult to stop once someone starts smoking. Among the youngsters age 13, this was 42.9% and 0.0% respectively and among the youngsters age 14, 44.4% and 31.6%, from the group age 15, 31.5% and 55.3% and from the group age 16, 37.0% and 31.8% respectively.