

4.0 The Survey done in Sri Lanka

Sample

Under the guidance of WHO and UNICEF office, the survey in Sri Lanka's schools was carried out during the period June to August 1999 to cover all public and private schools in the country (except for those schools with less than 40 children). Grades 8 to 10 children in 100 selected schools were included in the sampling frame. A two-stage cluster sample design was used to produce a representative sample of above named grades.

School level

The first stage sampling frame consisted of all public and private schools (except for those schools with less than 40 students) containing any of grades 8 to 10. Schools were selected with probability proportional to school enrolment size. 100 schools were selected initially by WHO and two schools were ineligible to be included in the sample.

Class level

The second sampling stage was consisting of systematic equal probability sampling (with a random start) of classes from each school that participated in the survey. All second period classes in the selected schools were included in the sampling frame. All students in the selected classes were eligible to participate in the survey.

4.1 How the Survey was Conducted?/Data collection

All precautionary measures were taken by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) at the survey stage to obtain free and accurate responses of the students. Prior to the survey was started, groups of Director of Education were hand picked from 8 provinces, totaling 22 officers island wide. These officers were summoned to the MEHE on the 9th June, 1999 and one day session was conducted by the country coordinator advised and guided by Dr. Diyanath Samarasighe, an expert in the field. Printed questionnaires in both Sinhala and Tamil languages (the two national languages in the country) along with School ID forms and Class level ID forms were made available to the data enumerators. The said practical session was conducted for them until each officer becomes familiar with the survey process.

Directors of Education themselves visited the schools after making all the principals and relevant teachers and the students in grades 8 to 10 classes and their parents aware through the school principals. Each director had around five to six schools in their sample and they spent a minimum of one day in each school and in each class. The 2nd period was selected for the administration of questionnaire.

The questionnaire prepared on the guidelines of WHO comprised core component that provided similar data for the comparison between countries and regions and a set of

optional component that provided data to analyze the special issues relevant to the Sri Lankan situation.

After the survey was completed in the whole country school wise and class wise response sheets separately received by the MEHE were sent to WHO as had been instructed by them.

The survey instrument designed to assess the prevalence of smoking contained different questions in the core section under five major areas namely Rates of smoking, Knowledge and Attitudes towards Tobacco, Attitudes towards Smoking, Knowledge of Media messages about Smoking and what were taught in the school about smoking. As such the responses for questions are analyzed under the above headings. Out of the sample of 100 schools selected for the survey 89.0% (89 out of 100) participated and 2896 students (2896 out of 3253) were interviewed. Therefore, the overall response rate was 76.3%. The aggregated responses for a particular question was determined by using a computer programme and the respective percentages were determined at the 95% confidence interval. In this study a never smoker or non-smoker is defined as a student who has never smoked tobacco and a current smoker (present-smoker) a student that has smoked at least one to two puffs of tobacco.

Response Rates

Schools-85.7% 84 of the 98 sample schools participated.

Students-89.0%, 2896 of the 3253 sample students completed the usable questionnaires.

Over all Response Rate-85.7*, 89.0% = 76.3%

5.0 ANALYZIS OF DATA

For the analysis of data a weighting factor was supplied to each student response to adjust for non-response and the varying probabilities of selection. The computer programmes SUDAN and Efi Info were used to analyze the data and the respective percentages were determined at the 95% confidence interval. In this study a never smoker or non-smoker is defined as a student who has never smoked tobacco and a current smoker (present smokers) a student that has smoked at least one to two puffs of tobacco.

5.1 Smoking Rates

The analysis of responses to question No. 4 included to identify the number of smokers in the sample, indicates that 12.5% of the children have been exposed to smoking; gender wise analysis show the 17.5% of males and 6.8% of females have smoked. When these findings are further extended according to age groups for years 13,14 and 15, it could be seen that the proportion accessed to smoking are 11.6%, 10.9% and 14% respectively. Even though the problem of smoking amongst school going young children is not an acute problem in Sri Lanka like in many other countries (Poland 79.8%; Moscow 67.2%; Ukraine 73.6%), this is a matter for policy-makers to take some preventive measures.