

V. Discussion

5.1 Tobacco use

The results in our study showed that over one-fourth of ever smokers, first tried their cigarettes in adolescents and the likelihood of the burden of tobacco use will increase in the near future where 11.9% of male never smokers and 11.0% of female never smokers are susceptible to initiating smoking, with girls never smokers increasing fast in the near future. Other tobacco products is not the trend in Macao as only around 2% currently use some other form of tobacco.

5.2 School curriculum

Approximately one in eight students were taught about the dangers of smoking but less than one-third of them discussed the reasons that makes young people their age smoke. This lack of teaching the health effects of smoking creates a big gap in the scope and nature of health information and instructions included in the school tobacco use curriculum.

5.3 Cessation

The data indicates the need to establish counseling services and smoking cessation programs to help young smokers quit smoking as over half of current smokers desire to stop smoking and have actually tried to stop.

5.4 Environmental Tobacco Use

Young people who were exposed to tobacco smoke is high, almost 4 in 10 students live in homes and 5 in 10 are in public place where other smoke in their presence, 5 in 10 have one or more parents who smoke.

It is said in the literature that an environment conducive to smoking will encourage young people to smoke, especially if their parents and peers smoke. In addition to that ETS is a class of a carcinogen like asbestos, benzene and radon and claims about three thousands deaths each year in the United States of America. Unfortunately the harmful of ETS are

not well known by current young smokers in Macao where around half of them (56.0%) think that smoke from others is harmful to them. Although we have legislation, still there is the urgent need to implement legislation efficiently to ban smoking in public places with the majority of both never smokers (61.4%) and current smokers (48.4%) approving of such measures.

5.5 Knowledge and attitudes

There is a gap that current smokers were less likely than never smokers to think smoking from others is harmful to them. This might lead to the conclusion that a large number of young people start smoking due to their ignorance of its consequences. Another important finding is that more current smokers especially girls think smoking made them more attractive than never smokers. Therefore, there is an urgent need intervention to remove these misleading and false images of smokers that tobacco industry used to promote it.

5.6 Exposure to media and advertising

The tobacco industry spent a huge budget annually to promote their product through advertising. The results of this study provide clear evidence that the majority of young people are exposed to pro-tobacco messages in media. Almost one fourth of current smokers are offered free cigarettes by a tobacco company representative and had an object with a cigarette brand logo on it.

5.7 Access and availability

It is amazing that young people have easy access to cigarettes which encourage those young people to smoke, Over 9 in 10 of young smokers were not refused purchase of cigarettes in a store because of their age. With the evidence of literature, parental guidance and objection to smoking is a very key factor to prevent young people aged 13-15 years from smoking.