

5th International Conference on

Pediatric Nursing and Healthcare

July 11-12, 2016 Cologne, Germany

E-cigarettes: Youth and trends in vaping

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Background & Aims: The rapid increase in marketing and availability of Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) globally in the past few years has resulted in significant trends in youth vaping.

Methods: E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that deliver a nicotine-containing aerosol or vapor by heating a solution of nicotine, a glycerin derivative-propylene glycol or glycerol, and flavoring agent. E-cigarette use rose among youth in the US from 3.3% in 2011 to 6.8% in 2012. The trial and use of e-cigarettes has been higher among youth in Europe and Asia.

Results: Recent evidence supports the adverse health consequences of early initiation of smoking among youth. Cognitive maturation is occurring throughout adolescence, and exogenous nicotine exposure and cigarette use in adolescence has been associated with both long-term structural and functional changes in the brain including lasting cognitive and behavioral impairments, including disrupted memory, attention, and executive function. The adolescent brain exhibits greater reward effects from nicotine exposure than adults, making youth more susceptible to a life-long battle with nicotine addiction.

Conclusions: This presentation will address the prevalence of e cigarette use among youth, evidence on the effect of initiation of e-cigarette use and conventional cigarettes, current policies globally on e-cigarettes and recommendations to protect the health of children and youth.

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Explaining the parent's cancer to their children: A specific intervention to enhance communication in the family

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Background: The clinical practice shows that children of parents with cancer can develop emotional and behavioral problems. Different studies underline the efficacy of an open communication with children about the parent's illness to reduce distress, but also the difficulties of parents to explain their illness to children.

Aim: Aims of the project are to inform or improve the children's knowledge of their parent's cancer; to facilitate children coping with the illness; to enhance parents' competence and communication about cancer inside family.

Methodology: At the beginning of parent's cancer way, the pediatric hemato-oncologist and the psychologist, without parents' presence, explained to children, with the support of metaphors and images of the parent's disease, their needs and fears. Then counseling sessions to parents are organized to increase the parental competence. This intervention is based on the collaboration of different health-care specialists and it is addressed to patients affected by cancer and their underage children. Further it has been realized by a specific questionnaire to evaluate the family atmosphere and the children's psychological conditions after the intervention.

Results: Since 2012, 33 families participated in the program. Preliminary and partial analyses of 27 questionnaires underline the onset of a large collaboration (18.5% totally, 40.7% very, 29.6% quite, and 11.2% no more) in the family and a good parents' satisfaction (33.3% very satisfied, and 66.7% extremely). 63% of parents showed that in their family, after the intervention, it was totally possible to have an open communication about the cancer. Regarding children's psychological conditions, the majority of parents noted that their sons were not more irritable (55.6% never, 25.9% rarely, 7.4% sometimes, and 11.1% often), anguished (70.4% never, 18.5% rarely, 7.4% sometimes, and 3.7% often), depressed (92.6% never, 7.4% rarely), and that children did not have more aggressive behaviors (81.5% never, 11.1% rarely, 3.7% sometimes, and 3.7% often).

Preliminary comment: The project showed the advantages of the direct engagement of the children in the communication of parent's cancer to facilitate the relationship and to reduce the family distress through an effective reported strategy.

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