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Shockingly high rates of smokers in Saudi youths and their parents: High incidences of dental caries fluorosis and oral cancers among smokers- An eye opening community health survey

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Background: Smoking has been a global problem for decades. Globally there are one billion smokers. On an average a smoker dies about 10 years earlier than a non smoker. According to WHO, every 6.2 seconds one current or an Ex smoker dies (more than 5 million deaths per year). WHO also estimates that yearly more than 600,000 people die due to second hand smoke (one death every 51.4 seconds). If this trend continues the WHO estimates the death toll among tobacco users will rise to about eight million (one every 3.9 seconds) per year by 2030.

Objectives: Due to this alarming forecast we decided to estimate the number of smokers in our community (youths and the senior citizens), assess their oral health and to raise awareness about dangers of smoking.

Methods: Since smoking is global problem and smokers are found in every gender and age group, we decided to estimate the number of smokers in Hail community and the state of their general and dental health. A questionnaire was distributed among the community members and their responses were analyzed. In addition to the distributed questionnaires more than 200 members (age range 15-75) were directly interviewed and their oral cavity was thoroughly checked for tooth decay.

Results: Based on our data analysis (n=200) we found 34.5% smokers. We found 22.5% of the parents to be smokers also. There was no statistical difference in the number of smokers between the educated and the non educated community members. Incidences of dental caries, oral cancers and fluorosis were significantly higher among the smokers. We then interviewed oral surgeons in the area. According to the area dentists at an average about 81% of their patients were smokers and 39% of their patients had diabetes. Most of these dentists (60%) reported seeing dental caries as most prevalent followed by periodontitis and periapical abscess cases in the Hail community. 50% of dentists also reported seeing adenocarcinoma cases among their patients.

Conclusion: The number of smokers is shockingly high among our youths and the senior citizens of this area. The government should ban smoking in all government buildings, schools and other common public places.

Biography

Ibrahim Khalil AL Ibrahim is a 4th year dental student at College of Dentistry in the University of Hail. He is a strong advocate for volunteer work and sharing happiness with everyone. He is a good reader and a weekly opinion writer at Makkah newspaper. He is involved in students' activity since early childhood school. He was a President of Student Activity Club in both intermediate and high schools. He is now a Vice President of "Together for a Beautiful Smile Club" at college of dentistry and an ambassador of "Traffic Safety volunteer Group" in Hail city. He involved last year in many activities such as Hail Rally, Dessert Festival and Traffic Safety week. His professional interests focus on increasing awareness and good oral hygiene among the community. His current project "High Rates of Discoloration and Dental Caries among the Smokers of Hail Region and Inheritance of PTC Gene" which won the first prize in medical research field at the University of Hail. He recently received an excellence prize for his outstanding academic performance from the University of Hail.

Abdullah Faraj ALShammari a 4th year dental Student at college of dentistry in the University of Hail. He is a strong advocate for discipline and volunteer work. He is involved in students' activity since early childhood school. Abdullah was a president of Student Cultural Club in both intermediate and high schools. He is now a president of "Together for a Beautiful Smile Club" at college of dentistry. He involved last year in many activities such as Hail Rally, Dessert Festival and Garden mall awareness day. His professional interests focus on increasing awareness and good oral hygiene among the community. His current project "High Rates of Discoloration and Dental Caries among the Smokers of Hail Region and Inheritance of PTC Gene" which won the first prize in medical research field at the University of Hail.

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