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Tobacco chewing practices, awareness and expenditure: A cross-sectional study in an urban slum of Bhavnagar city

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Tobacco consumption has been an addiction in India since time immemorial. Bhavnagar is a city with tobacco chewing rates higher than most cities in India. Considering the enormous health complications associated with tobacco use, it is of utmost importance to understand the factors leading to its use and to plan strategies to reduce its intake. Report of this study reviews the tobacco chewing practice in different age groups, reason of starting, any awareness about its health related adverse consequences, any attempt of quitting, total monthly expenditure on tobacco etc. A cross-sectional study was conducted in Vadva, an urban slum settlement in Bhavnagar city (Gujarat, India). The area represents the low socio-economic group and inhabits diverse ethnicities. The information was collected on a pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire determining the frequency of use, knowledge and attitude regarding chewing tobacco. Among the population studied, out of 150 respondents, 108 respondents (72%) were chewing tobacco in some form. Tobacco use in urban slums of Bhavnagar city is almost thrice than the rest of India (25.9%) but higher among lower social economic group. The fact that women are also chewing tobacco is a matter of concern. More than three-fourth of the tobacco chewers started chewing due to peer pressure. More than 95% of the tobacco chewers were aware of the harmful effects due to tobacco chewing. About three-fourth of the tobacco chewers continue to chew tobacco as they are now addicted to it. More than 43% of the tobacco chewers agreed that this habit of theirs puts an economic burden on them pulling them below poverty line. Tobacco control therefore should be a top priority amongst the substance abuses in Bhavnagar

Biography

Mili Kakadia has been a student of Government Medical College, Bhavnagar, India from August 2011 and graduated in MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine; Bachelor of Surgery) in March 2017. She is now preparing for USMLE step 2 to pursue residency in USA.

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