

Cigarette Smoking and Oral Health among healthcare students

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Abstract:

Background: The knowledge, attitudes and practices of cigarette smoking and health risks among health workers has been found to be predictive of their efficiency as agents for tobacco cessation campaigns. **Objective:** To describe the knowledge, attitudes and practices of cigarette smoking and oral health risks among healthcare professional students. **Design:** A cross sectional multi-level study. **Setting:** College of Health Sciences, University of Nairobi. **Subjects:** Two hundred and eighty one students, **Results:** Thirty four (12.1 %) of the students were current smokers, 174 (61.95%) had never smoked, while 73 (26%) were former smokers. Seventy nine point four per cent of the current smokers were males and 20.6% were females. Pharmacy students had the highest smoking prevalence at 11 (32.4%), while dental and nursing students had the lowest percentages of current smokers. Differences observed in smoking status of students in the constituent schools of the College of Health Sciences were statistically significant ($p = 0.008$). Apart from knowledge levels on the association between tobacco consumption and lung cancer ($p = 0.142$), there were statistically significant differences in the awareness of the severe oral and systemic effects of smoking amongst the four student groups. **Conclusions:** There is a need for harmonisation of teaching of oral and systemic effects of smoking so as to impact on the smoking habits and effectiveness of healthcare professional students as agents of smoking cessation programmes