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Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental period, and the initiation of e-cigarette use during this phase can seriously impact future tobacco-related behavior. Secondhand smoke exposure (SHSe) has been linked to increased e-cigarette initiation among adolescents. This study aims to investigate the relationship between SHSe and e-cigarette use intention in adolescents in Armenia, adjusting for socio-demographic factors.

Material and Methods

A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 15-17-year-old adolescents attending private (n=1) and public (n=3) high schools in Yerevan (the capital) and one randomly selected province in Armenia in February 2023. The survey assessed socio-demographics, past 30-days SHSe, as well as intention to use and actual use of e-cigarettes. E-cigarette use intention was scored from 0 (definitely not) to 3 (definitely yes). Multivariable regression explored the association between e-cigarette use intention and SHSe while adjusting for gender, school type, parental employment, and living in the capital vs. region.

Results

A total of 366 adolescents participated in the survey, with 64.4% of them being females, 71.3% residing in Yerevan, and 77.0% attending public schools. About 96.5% of adolescents had employed fathers, while only 76.2% had employed mothers. Among those who never used e-cigarettes (59.3%), the average intention score was 0.84 out of possible 3. Majority of adolescents (68.3%) were exposed to SHS from any source for at least one day within the past 30 days. The primary sources of SHSe were friends (44.6%), fathers (37.2%), and other relatives (29.7%). In the multivariable regression analysis, the intention score was positively associated with SHSe, after adjusting for socio-demographic characteristics ($\beta=0.33$, $p=0.014$).

Conclusions

This study highlights a significant association between the intention to use e-cigarettes and SHSe among adolescents in Armenia. Given the high prevalence of SHSe in Armenia, further exploration of this relationship is essential to inform public health policies and interventions targeting adolescents.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Health promotion in universities: the national university smoke-free network

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Introduction

With the aim of implementing common policies of health promotion to counter the use of tobacco cigarettes and new products and e-cig at university, the UNIVERSITY SMOKE-FREE network was set up in Italy.

Objective

The main objectives of the network are: to update and uniform the university regulations; to investigate exposure of students and staff to active and passive smoking by means of a multicentre survey; to implement initiatives for helping students to stop smoking; to produce information and teaching materials.

Material and Methods

With the involvement of the university governments, a network was set up comprising 14 universities: Milan La Statale (UNIMI), Milan-Bicocca, Milan-Humanitas, Brescia, Insubria, Pavia, Bergamo, Rome Sapienza, Parma, Padua, Florence, Urbino, the Polytechnic University of Marche, and Palermo. In order to carry out the survey, a questionnaire was developed and validated¹, investigating active cigarette smoking, use of new products, exposure to passive smoking, knowledge of the health effects of smoking, and knowledge of, and agreement on regulations.

Results

All network universities have started to review and update their smoke-free regulations. The survey protocol, developed at UNIMI, was shared among the universities for approval by their respective Ethics Committees.

The survey was completed in 2021 by the University of Milan La Statale, and in May-July 2023 by the Universities of Brescia and Urbino, while it will be conducted in the other universities in 2024. To date, more than 10000 students participated in the survey (11-25% of students). First results show differences among universities and scientific and humanistic faculties, in terms of active and passive smoking, and awareness of risks of smoking².

Conclusions

The establishment of the UNIVERSITY SMOKE-FREE network is an important step to counter smoking at university. Conducting a multicentre survey may be useful to develop information material and implement common policies.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Higher smoking and e-cigarette use among young adults with mental health problems: An analysis of wave 4 of growing up in Ireland, the national longitudinal study of children in Ireland

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Introduction

Worsening youth mental health has been an increasing public health concern particularly during Covid-19. Associations between mental health problems (MHP) and tobacco use are well-established and linked with inequalities but whether similar patterns exist for e-cigarette use is less clear.

Objective

We examine smoking and e-cigarette use in Irish 20 years olds with doctor-diagnosed MHP.

Material and Methods

We use data from 5,190, 20 year-olds from Wave 4 of Growing Up in Ireland Child Cohort, the national longitudinal study of children and young people. MHP were assessed using 20-year-olds' self-reports who had been diagnosed by a doctor, psychologist, or psychiatrist. Young adults also self-reported their ever and current smoking, and ever and current use of e-cigarettes. Frequencies and cross-tabulations analyses were performed using STATA version 16.1.

Results

Among Irish 20-year-olds, 19.4% (n=1,008) reported having been diagnosed with a MHP. The majority of these (n=949) reported depression or anxiety. Young adults with MHPs reported higher prevalence for all measures of smoking and e-cigarette use than did those without MHP, and findings were statistically significant for all 4 measures. Almost half of those with MHP were current smokers (47%; n=474 vs. 35.2%; n=1472 without MHP). Almost four out of five were ever-smokers (78.3%; n=789 vs. 72.8%; n=3018). E-cigarette ever-use was 56.9% (n=574) compared with 45.5% (n=1886) in those without MHP and e-cigarette current use was 16.6% (n=168) compared with 12.5% (n=522).

Conclusions

Among young adults, similar associations with MHP exist

for e-cigarette use as have been shown to exist for smoking. Our data do not include other mental health problems not reported or not doctor-diagnosed. However, for 20 year-olds with depression and anxiety, a need exists for education and cessation interventions to address their significantly higher rates of smoking and e-cigarette use which likely exacerbate further the health inequalities among this vulnerable group.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Young adult smoking in Ireland – Initiation, prevalence, cessation, and intervention points

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Introduction

Young adult smoking initiation and subsequent smoking patterns receive less attention than teenage initiation and patterns, being perceived to be less problematic despite 20-34 year-olds having the highest smoking prevalence of any age group.

Objective

We set out to establish prevalence of ever-smoking, former, current and daily smoking in 20-year-olds in Ireland, and most common ages of initiation into smoking, and examine motivations for smoking, and reported difficulty with cessation.

Material and Methods

We use data from 5,190, 20 year-olds from Wave 4 of Cohort '98 (Child Cohort) of Growing Up in Ireland, a nationally representative longitudinal study of children and young people. All analyses were performed using STATA version 16.1.

Results

Ever-smoking among 20 year-olds was 74% (n=3,807) and current smoking was 37.5% (n=1,946). Among ever-smoked, 35.5% (n=1,347) were occasional smokers and 15.5% (n=592) were daily smokers. Reported reasons for smoking were "because friends smoke" (29.7%, n=1,082); "enjoy it" (20.9%, n=762); and "helps cope with stress" (15%, n=547). Only 2% (n=74) reported smoking because they "can't give it up". However, 12.8% (n=488) said that they had tried to give up cigarettes but found that they couldn't. More than half of ever-smokers had started smoking between the ages of 17 and 19 (age 17 – 16.4%, n=669; age 18 – 23.1%, n=885; age 19 – 13.6%, n=520).

Conclusions

Smoking rates are high among 20 year olds with three-quarters of respondents reporting that they had ever-smoked. More than 1 in 8 had tried to stop smoking but were unable to. The ages between 17 and 19 were vulnerable ones for smoking initiation, perhaps indicative of young adults leaving school, starting higher education and jobs, and moving away from home. Of all initiation ages analysed (11-20 years), age 18 was the most frequently reported age suggesting needs for prevention and cessation for older teens and young adults.

Conflicts of interest