

MEDICAL STUDENTS' APPROACH TOWARDS SMOKING AND SMOKING CESSATION IN WARSAW, STRASBOURG AND TEHERAN

**R. Machowicz^{1,2}, J. Ciechanska³, N. Mahboobi⁴, E. Wnekowicz⁵, K. Zycinska¹
and T. M. Zielonka¹**

¹Department of Family Medicine,

²Department of Hematology, Oncology and Internal Diseases, and

³Faculty of Medicine, Warsaw Medical University, Warsaw, Poland;

⁴Tehran Hepatitis Center, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran; ⁵Medical College, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland;

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the world. Medical students play important role in smoking prevention especially as future physicians, but also as the role models in society. Their approach, although strongly influenced by medical education, is based on cultural and socio-economical background. Smoking prevalence among physicians in Poland is 19%, in France 32% and in Iran 13%. The aim of this study was an analysis of smoking habits, prevalence and attitudes towards smoking cessation in medical students from three different countries: Poland, France and Iran. Material and Methods A questionnaire on tobacco smoking was distributed among medical students from three Medical Universities: in Warsaw, Strasbourg and Teheran. The study population consisted of 1036 students: 500 from Poland, 365 from France and 171 from Iran. Results The percentage of smokers among medical students was 14.2% in Warsaw, 14.5% in Strasbourg and 3.5% in Teheran. The prevalence of ex-smokers was 13.6%, 18.1% and 1.2% respectively. Use of nicotine replacement therapy or pharmacological aid in smoking cessation was 9% in Warsaw, 7% in Strasbourg and 0% in Teheran. In Strasbourg students willing to choose surgical specialization in future were more likely to be smoking with OR 2,6 (95% CI 1,4-4,9). Students who never used to smoke were more likely than actual smokers to warn their friends and family that smoking is harmful to health and advise them to quit. In Warsaw OR was 3,8 (95% CI 2,0-7,1), in Strasbourg 5,6 (2,4-12,7) and 1,6 (NS) in Teheran. Conclusions Smoking prevalence among medical students is lower than among physicians. Similarities in smoking prevalence and attitudes between medical students in Warsaw and Strasbourg were observed, while in Teheran percentage of smokers was reported much lower. Pharmacological aid in smoking cessation was rarely used among medical students.

Vulnerability to smoking may be to some extent connected with the traits of character responsible also for the choice of future career.