

Between five (in Huancayo) and six (in Lima, Tarapoto and Trujillo) students out of every ten respondents believed that cigarette smoke from other people was harmful. Nine out of every 10 students agreed that smoking should be banned from public places (Tables 10A and 10B). There were no differences by sex, age, or educational level.

COMMENTS

The GYTS-Peru study was developed in four cities of the country: Lima, the capital city, with a population of close to 7 million inhabitants and that holds one third of the country's entire population; Trujillo, the second most important city in the country, located in the Peruvian Coastal region; Huancayo, located at 2300 meters above sea level, in the highlands of the Andes; and Tarapoto, a city located in the Jungle area of the country.

This study has defined the characteristics of tobacco prevalence among the student population of the four cities. Life prevalence in Lima was higher than in the other provincial cities. Consumption was higher among men than women, although in Lima, consumption among women shows a quick tendency to narrow the difference with male patterns, similarly to existing patterns in developed countries. Almost half of the student population interviewed had smoked at least once in their lives at age 15. In the city of Trujillo, it is more frequent to find men smoking before the age of 10 than women.

Students smoke mainly during social events, with friends or anywhere else. Women tend to smoke more at home than men in certain cities of Peru. It is less frequent to find that students smoke in school. The main models of retail commercialization of cigarettes are through stores and street vendors, who sell them by the unit. Half of the students bought their cigarettes in the stores. In Tarapoto, half of the students who purchased their cigarettes in a store were not turned down due to their age. The latter was noted in two out of every 10 students in the cities of Huancayo, Lima, and Trujillo, and none were turned down due to their age.

A large percentage of students who have smoked (more than 65%) wish to quit smoking. Seven out of every 10 students have tried to quit. This need to quit is frequently frustrated due to lack of institutional support, and also because most of the young students (9 out of 10) believe that they can quit smoking anytime they want to.

Even though 2-3 out of every 10 habitual smokers believe that smoking is harmful for their health, one third of the smokers, and almost half of the non-smokers in the four cities felt that "smoking is safe during one or two years, provided you quit afterwards".

There is a clear advertising campaign by tobacco companies that has great impact over the youngsters, particularly among those who attend high schools in Peru. Half of the students had seen anti-tobacco messages in the communications media. Two out of every ten students had seen anti-tobacco ads during sporting events, concerts and others, or in panels. The effects of smoking are discussed at school, although the level is still insufficient.

Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke is high in the four cities of the study. Two out of every 10 students are exposed inside their homes, and 3-4 out of every ten is exposed outside their homes. Five (Huancayo) to six (Lima, Tarapoto, Trujillo) out of every ten students interviewed considered that the smoke from other persons' cigarettes were harmful. Nine out of 10 students agreed that smoking in public places should be banned. Peru has legal regulations that prohibit smoking in public places, however, it is necessary to implement the mechanisms that will force the public to comply with the law, or respect the right to keep an environment free of tobacco smoke.

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