

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIGARETTE SMOKING HABIT AND PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS OF STUDENTS

Aleksandra Mačkaški,¹ Aleksandar Višnjić,² Nikola Vojinov,³ Saša Ristić⁴

¹Health Center Zaječar, Zaječar, Serbia

²University of Niš, Faculty of Medicine, Niš, Serbia

³Clinical Centre Niš, Niš, Serbia

⁴Institute of Public Health Niš, Niš, Serbia

DOI: 10.5937/BatutPHCO24109M

Background: Smoking cigarettes is still a risk factor and a preventable cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. Previous research revealed that family and peer relationships amongst other psychosocial risk factors, play a vital role in the initiation and level of tobacco use.

Objectives and Methods: This study aimed to examine the relationship between smoking and psychosocial factors within the Serbian group and the English group of medical students, and the influence of peer and family members' smoking habits, individual beliefs and attitudes, as factors explaining the similarities and differences of smoking behaviour among those study groups.

This study was conducted among 103 medical students at the University of Niš (Serbia). The data was collected through an online Google form survey. Survey responses were used to determine social and personal traits of the individual including Smoking Habits and status, and reasons for smoking or not smoking. Statistical analysis was performed using *IBM SPSS Statistics* (version 18.0).

Results: There were significantly more smokers among the Serbian medical students compared to English students ($\chi^2=5.720$; $p<0.001$). A higher number of Serbian students use smoking as a defence mechanism against stress and anxiety ($\chi^2=8.189$; $p=0.004$). Additionally, the presence of peer and parental smoking was strongly associated with smoking susceptibility among Serbian students. English students are less likely to smoke under societal influence compared to Serbian students ($\chi^2=13.004$; $p=0.011$).

Conclusion: The findings illustrate that there were significant differences in smoking behaviours and psychosocial influences between Serbian and English students thus health education, programs and policies associated with cigarette smoking need to be culturally sensitive and tailored based on these psychosocial factors.

Keywords: smoking, psychosocial factors, students