

Analysis of Smoking-Related Characteristics Over Time in Korean Adult Smokers: Findings from the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Korea Survey

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Abstract

Background: This study aimed to track changes in demographic and smoking-related characteristics, such as perception of smoking and health among Korean adult smokers.

Methods: We conducted the three waves of the International Tobacco Control (ITC) survey-Korea (2005/2008/2010) using random digit-dialing telephone interviews. The ITC sample for each survey included 1,002 respondents at Wave 1, 1,818 at Wave 2 (including 441 cohort respondents from Wave 1), and 1,753 at Wave 3 (including 284 cohort respondents from Wave 1 and 745 from Wave 2).

Results: The largest age group ranged from 40–49 to ≥60, and the percentage of female respondents also has increased from Wave 1 to Wave 3. Even though the mean number of cigarettes per day significantly decreased from 18.2 to 17 in men, the same figure showed an insignificant increase for women from 14.3 to 18.6. As for the knowledge of health risk, awareness regarding the danger of stroke (from 35.5% to 51.4%) and blindness (from 31.6% to 42.1%) due to smoking was significantly improved ($P < 0.01$), whereas that of impotence, skin wrinkling, and peripheral vascular disease was not improved. The rate of subjects who answered “Health status is poor” increased from 13.2% to 16.4%, whereas rate of subjects who answered “Smoking has damaged health” decreased from 90% to 75.2%.

Conclusion: This study indicates that different strategies for the elderly and women should be developed and implemented because of their increased smoking rates. In addition, efforts to increase cessation rates should aim at increasing awareness of smoking-related diseases and health concern regarding smoking.

Keywords: Smoking-Related Characteristics; Perception of Health Risk; Smoking Rate

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