

Trends in Tobacco Use among Thai Adolescents

Tawima Sirirassamee MD, Buppha Sirirassamee PhD

Abstract

Background: Tobacco use continues to be the leading global cause of preventable death. Understanding the trends in prevalence of cigarette smoking and smoking behaviors among adolescents enables physicians to target prevention resources more effectively.

Objective: The objectives of this study were to monitor the prevalence of smoking, to compare the prevalence of smoking in subgroups of region, gender and age, and to explore smoking behavior among adolescent smokers.

Material and Method: The International Tobacco Control Survey-Thailand is a population-based, national representative, longitudinal survey conducted among adolescents between the ages of 13-17. Adolescents were sampled from Bangkok and 4 regions of Thailand using stratified multistage sampling. Three surveys were conducted during January 2005 to March 2008. Respondents were asked to complete self-administered questionnaires. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results: Overall, smoking prevalence has increased from 12.0% in wave 1 to 14.3% in wave 2 and 18.3% in wave 3. Smoking prevalence in males was more than 10 times higher than females. Manufactured cigarettes were most frequently used by adolescents. More than 70% of smokers reported that they smoked manufactured cigarettes. Total amount of tobacco use per day increased from wave 1 to wave 3. The proportion of smokers who reported that they bought cigarettes by themselves increased during the follow-up waves (38.3%, 60.9%, 68.2% respectively). More than 20% of smokers reported that they never plan to quit smoking.

Conclusion: Smoking prevalence among Thai adolescents was apparently increased.

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