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*Smoking habits of 5th year medical students
of the Medical University of Lublin*

There are more than 1.1 milliard tobacco smokers around the world. This is around 33% of people aged 15 or more (3). More than 800 million tobacco smokers live in Third World countries (7). Around 39% of adult men and 19% of adult women in Poland are tobacco smokers. Annually cigarettes consumption in Poland is 3291 sticks per capita. 25 % of Polish citizens aged 15 or more is heavily addicted, which mean they smoke more than 20 cigarettes a day(12). According to WHO 1999 report in 2020 tobacco smoking will become the largest single health problem, causing an estimated 8.4 million deaths annually. 178 million dollars daily is spent in the United States for treatment of diseases caused by smoking.

The aim of the study was to evaluate the rate of smoking of the 5th year medical students at Medical University of Lublin and to find out what do these students think about smoking in public places.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

There were 155 people in the study. All of them were the 5th year medical students at the Medical University of Lublin. Characteristics of the studied population is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the studied population. Letters used in the table: A – parents, B – kinsfolk, C – grandparents, D – nobody in the family, W – rented or owned flat, X – family house, Y – students house, Z – rented room

	Smokers 14.2%				Ex-smokers 15.7%				Non- smokers 70.1%			
Age	23.81				23.92				23.73			
Sex	women		men		women		men		women		men	
	18.2%		81.8%		54.2%		45.8%		70.4%		29.6%	
Smoking family members	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
	52%	12%	4%	32%	42%	9.6%	3.3%	45.1%	40.8%	6.7%	4.4%	48.3%
Place of residence	W	X	Y	Z	W	X	Y	Z	W	X	Y	Z
	45.5%	13.6%	13.6%	27.3%	32%	32%	24%	12%	32.4%	13%	25%	29.6%
Living with smokers	yes		no		yes		no		yes		no	
	59.1%		40.9%		25%		75%		24.1%		75.9%	

The study was performed by means of self-administered 44 items questionnaire. The study was carried out between October and December 2003.

RESULTS

We found statistically significant the fact ($p < 0.002$) that smoking students live with other smoking persons more often than with non-smokers. The most frequent reasons for smoking for the first time were as follows: curiosity (32%), peers influence (32%), stress (27%). In Table 2 we showed the length of the smoking period and the number of daily smoked cigarettes.

Table 2. Smoking period and number of daily smoked cigarettes (100% is 22 actually smoking students)

Smoking period		Number of daily smoked cigarettes	
less than a year	13.6%	up to 5 sticks	27.3%
a year	9.1%	5-10 sticks	36.4%
2 years	18.2	11-20 sticks	27.3%
4 years and more	59%	more than 20 sticks	9

More than 2/3 of the smoking students (69.2%) admitted that they smoke more cigarettes before exams – almost twice as much as normally. 90.9% of the smoking students declare that smoking has no effect on grades they get, but 13.6% of them admit that they cannot take an exam without a cigarette. Pharmacology (43% of smoking students) and pathomorphology (28 smoking students) are subjects which cause the biggest stress and increase the number of smoked cigarettes.

63.3% of the smokers tried to stop smoking in the past and 71.4% of them noticed an improvement in their health status. Data concerning the length of the non-smoking period and most frequent reasons for starting smoking again are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Non-smoking period and reasons for starting smoking again

Non-smoking period		Reasons for starting smoking again	
1–2 weeks	35.7%	stress other than exam	33.3%
1–6 months	35.7%	exam	26.3%
more than 12 months	28.6%	smoking friends	40.4%

61.2% of the studied smokers stated they took part in classes on side-effects of smoking and they mentioned the following side-effects of smoking: cardiovascular diseases, lung cancer and pharynx cancer. The knowledge of mentioned above side-effects had no influence on the number of smoked cigarettes by the smoking students, attempts to stop smoking or on convincing their smoking family members to stop smoking. Of all the questioned students 90.9% think that information placed on cigarette boxes does not play any role in smoking prevention.

As the most frequent reasons for giving up smoking ex-smokers listed the following factors: decrease in physical condition, high costs of smoking, no satisfaction from smoking and bad mood. The knowledge of negative effects of smoking was the reason to cease smoking by 41.7% of ex-smokers and 62.5% of ex-smokers felt better after they gave up smoking.

Out of the non-smoking students 89.5% claim they spend time in places where smoking ban is being broken and 67.7% of them protest against such a situation. 11.6% the of non-smoking students stopped meeting with smokers who did not respond to requests to stop smoking in the presence of non-smokers, but 68.2% of smokers declare that they can abstain from smoking in the presence of non-smokers.

Ban on smoking is supported by 85.5 % of all the questioned students. Support of such a prohibition is correlated significantly with sex (women $p < 0.001$) and being a non-smoker (regardless of sex, $p < 0.001$). Of all the questioned students 70.3% think that a medical doctor should be a non-

smoking person. According to 98.9% of all the examined students smoking should be forbidden in the consulting rooms.

DISCUSSION

Smoking among medical students is a subject which can be found in the literature quite easily, but our results are slightly different from those of other authors. According to Zatoński among 5th year medical students at Polish medical universities 42% of male and 28% of female are smokers (15). The study of Kawczyńska-Butrym (1995) shows that 22% of Lublin universities students are smokers (5). Data from other countries are even alarming – in Albania 55% of male and 34% of female medical students are smokers whereas in Portugal only 11% of medical students, regardless of sex, is smoking (6, 13). In our study the smoking rate among male (81.8%) was higher than among female (18.2%) which is similar to the results of Dekker et al. (2). Of all the questioned students in our study 15.5% were ex-smokers, which is different from the data obtained by other authors (1,10).

Main reasons for starting smoking in our study were curiosity, peers influence and stress. In other countries reasons are different. For example, Iranian students start smoking mostly to release tension and in China among other reasons students mentioned stress, curiosity and loneliness (1, 14). The number of daily smoked cigarettes by the smoking students in our study was 12, which is much more than e.g. in Iran (1). Smoking-related diseases mentioned by the students in our study are similar to those mentioned by students in the study performed by Kawakami and Soltani and Bchir (4, 11). Data from our study show that most students think that information placed on cigarette boxes does not play any role in prevention of smoking. It is the same in the data of Siemiańska and Dubaniewicz (10). According to Zatoński, 56% of smoking medical students have tried to give up smoking, which is lower than in our study (15). Data from the study of Vakefliu et al. show that medical students support the idea to prohibit smoking in all public places and in hospitals as well, which is similar to our data (13).

CONCLUSIONS

1. The smoking rate among medical students in our study was 14.2% and is lower in comparison to other authors' data.
2. All the smoking students in our study declared the knowledge of smoking side-effects, however it had no influence on their addiction.
3. Smoking students smoke more cigarettes before exams and they claim that smoking has no effect on grades they receive.
4. The majority of all the questioned students are of the opinion that smoking should be prohibited in public places by law.

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SUMMARY

Smoking is becoming an increasingly serious health and social problem. According to WHO in 2020 smoking will become the greatest health problem, causing estimated 8.4 million deaths annually. In this study authors wanted to estimate if the smoking ratio among medical students has changed in comparison to previous studies. There were 155 fifth year medical students of the Medical University of Lublin included in the study. The study was carried out with the use of 44 items questionnaire. The smoking ratio in our study was 14.2% and most of the smokers were men. We found statistically significant the fact that smoking students live with other smoking persons more often than with non-smokers. Most frequent reasons for smoking for the first time were: curiosity (32%), peers influence (32%) and stress (27%). The average number of daily smoked cigarettes was 13.4. More than 2/3 of the smoking students admitted that they smoke more before exams. Pharmacology and pathomorphology are subjects which cause the biggest stress and thus increase in number of smoked cigarettes. Of all the questioned students 61.2% mentioned smoking side – effects, however, they claimed that it had no influence on the number of cigarettes they smoked or on convincing smoking their friends to stop smoking. Of all the questioned students 70.3% think that a medical doctor should be a non-smoking person.

Palenie tytoniu wśród studentów V roku Wydziału Lekarskiego Akademii Medycznej w Lublinie

Palenie tytoniu staje się coraz większym problemem społecznym i zdrowotnym szczególnie w krajach rozwijających się. WHO szacuje, że w roku 2020 palenie będzie największym pojedynczym problemem zdrowotnym, powodując około 8 milionów zgonów rocznie. W badaniu tym autorzy chcieli ocenić, czy w porównaniu z poprzednimi badaniami odsetek palących studentów wydziału lekarskiego uległ zmianie. Badaną grupę stanowiło 155 studentów piątego roku Wydziału Lekarskiego Akademii Medycznej w Lublinie. W badaniach wykorzystano kwestionariusz własnej konstrukcji, złożony z 44 pytań. Odsetek palących studentów w naszym badaniu wyniósł 14.2%, a większość tych osób stanowili mężczyźni. Odkryto zależność statystyczną pomiędzy mieszkaniem z osobą palącą papierosa a paleniem papierosów. Najczęstszymi przyczynami rozpo-

częcia palenia były ciekawość (32%), wpływ kolegów (32%) oraz stres (27%). Średnia ilość wypalanych papierosów przez osoby palące wynosiła 13,4 sztuki dziennie. Znaczna większość osób palących przyznaje, że pali więcej przed sesją egzaminacyjną, a przedmiotami, z których egzaminy powodowały największy wzrost wypalanych papierosów, były farmakologia i patomorfologia. 61,2% studentów podało, jakie są następstwa palenia tytoniu, jednak wiedza ta nie miała wpływu na zaprzestanie palenia lub też nakłanianie innych osób do rzucenia palenia. Większość, bo 70,3% wszystkich badanych osób, uważa, że lekarz powinien być osobą niepalącą.