

Peer Pressure and Tobacco Use Among Adolescents in Urban Slums

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Among
Adolescents

Sundas Hamna¹, Musarrat Jahan² and Wajahat Hussain¹

ABSTRACT

Objective: To find out frequency of tobacco use and effect of peer pressure on tobacco use among adolescents.

Study Design: A cross sectional analytical study

Place and Duration of Study: This study was conducted at the Community Medicine Department of Quid-e-Azam Medical College, Bahawalpur from January 2023 to June 2023.

Materials and Methods: Total 237 adolescents from urban slums of Bahawalpur City who were willing to participate in the study were taken by non-probability purposive sampling method. Using a pre-formed questionnaire with two components, data was gathered. Age and school was among the demographic variables in Part I, whereas smoking, smoking type and duration, reasons for smoking, and whether or not friends smoke are among the research variables in Part II. Data was entered and analyzed by using SPSS version 22. Post stratification chi square test was used to see any statistically significant difference between groups and p value less than 0.05 was taken as significant.

Results: Majority of the adolescents in study (73%) are abstaining from Tobacco use. Frequency of the tobacco use the adolescents showed that 55.6% of the adolescents using tobacco substances are from public sector schools. The tobacco use among study participants was significantly associated with peer pressure ($p < 0.0001$).

Conclusion: The tobacco use frequency is higher among adolescents in public sector schools and peer pressure is significantly associated with tobacco use.

Key Words: Peers, Adolescents, Smoking, Urban Slums.

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INTRODUCTION

Smoking is major social problem among adolescents worldwide. A crucial time in a person's development, adolescence is marked by a propensity for risky activities like the usage of illegal substances. The majority of tobacco product use starts throughout adolescence and grows from there. By the age of 18, 90% of daily cigarette users in adulthood start smoking, and by the age of 26, 99% start smoking. In the US, almost 1,600 young people start smoking for the first time every day, and every day, almost 200 young people do the same.¹ Early tobacco use tends to continue for longer periods of time, which increases the likelihood that dependence may develop.

Additionally, young people's initial drug exposure typically takes place in familiar environments with people in their social networks, making it all the more crucial to keep an eye on student drug use indications. Early identification of populations at risk for tobacco use can help shape public policies that value the school setting as an ideal location for preventive measures.² Smoking is the biggest preventable cause of death and disease worldwide. Around 80% of smokers worldwide reside in low- and/or middle-income nations, where the burden of tobacco-related diseases is particularly severe.³

Tobacco use is responsible for 70% of fatalities from lung, bronchial, and tracheal cancer and 11% of deaths from ischemic heart disease. It is anticipated that the burden of healthcare for non-communicable diseases will double due to the rising incidence of smoking that has been seen in emerging countries over the years. To track the trends in the use of tobacco and its derivatives, an effective and organized monitoring mechanism must be established.⁴⁻⁵ Marijuana, benzodiazepines, cocaine, crack, anticholinergic medications, mescal, and heroin are among the most frequently reported drugs taken by teenagers around the world. According to a household survey looking at teen drug use, 22.8% of people had used some sort of psychoactive substance.⁶⁻⁷ Family, friends, as well as unfavorable impressions of one's school and neighborhood, are strong mediators of the

¹. Department of Community Medicine / Psychiatry², Quid-e-Azam Medical College, Bahawalpur.

Correspondence: Dr. Wajahat Hussain, Assistant Professor of Community Medicine Dept. Quaid-e-Azam Medical College, Bahawalpur.

Contact No: 03336155599

Email: wajahatbukhari986@gmail.com

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likelihood of smoking. The most reliable indicator of adolescent substance use is peer pressure. Teenagers from low socioeconomic homes are more likely to smoke and use illicit drugs. However, there is research that suggests teenagers from wealthier socioeconomic backgrounds may also be more susceptible to developing substance use disorders. This may be because they have easy access to money to buy drugs.⁵⁻¹⁰

Smoking-related social influence may have a significant role in molding how people behave and think by influencing how resources are distributed, how opportunities are made available to them, and how conduct is constrained. One of the main causes of smoking is peer pressure, yet research also shows that the harm caused by friends' smoking is sometimes exaggerated and significantly affected.¹¹⁻¹² Through peer pressure, role modeling, and behavioral reinforcement, peers have a direct and indirect influence on tobacco smoking and other risky behaviors during adolescence. Adolescent friendship networks, however, are frequently heterogeneous, exposing members to both deviant and non-deviant influences.¹³ The purpose of the current study was to determine the frequency of tobacco use among adolescents and any potential peer group influences on this behavior.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross sectional analytical study was conducted from January 2023 to June 2023 in department of community medicine, Quaid-e-Azam Medical College, Bahawalpur, after taking ethical approval total 237 adolescents was included in the study from urban slums of Bahawalpur city through Non-probability purposive sampling which calculated from study of Bauman et al 19.33%¹⁴, and 95% level of confidence, 5% margin of error. The smoking was defined as use of cigarettes, cigar or pipes as well as modern electronic devices like e-cigarettes or vaping pens. Data was gathered by using preformed pretested questionnaire that comprises of two parts. Part-I includes demographic variables as age and school and part-II consists of study variables i.e. smoking, type and duration of smoking, reasons for smoking and whether friends are smoking or not. Data was entered and analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. Mean and standard deviation were calculated for numerical data like age. Frequencies and percentages were calculated. Stratification was done according to age, and class in which currently studying. Chi square test was applied to see any statistical difference between groups if existed and p value < 0.05 was taken as significant.

RESULTS

The overall aim of the study was to determine the effect of peer pressure on smoking among adolescents. The mean age of study subjects was 13.54±4.52 years.

Table-1 shows the extent to which the participants can be considered as smoking. The results showed that 73% are abstaining from smoking. In addition, 23% of the study participants had history of smoking. Frequency of tobacco use among the adolescents showed that 55.6% of the adolescents who were smoking are from public schools while 44.4% were from private schools. (Table-2). Cross tabulation of smoking and friends involved in tobacco use showed that friends of 64.0% adolescents who are smoking are also involved in the same activity while adolescents who are not involved in smoking their 90.7% friends are also not involved in the activity. (Table-3).

Table No. 1: Frequency of smoking among adolescents

Smoking	Frequency	Percentage
No	174	73.4%
Yes	63	26.6%
Total	237	100%

Table No. 2: Type of school and tobacco use status among adolescents

School	Smoking
Public	35 (55.6%)
Private	28 (44.4%)
Total	63 (100%)

Table No. 3: Peer pressure and tobacco use among adolescents

Smoking	Friends involved in smoking		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	48 (64.0%)	15 (9.3%)	63
No	27 (36.0%)	147 (90.7%)	174
Total	75 (100%)	162 (100%)	237

$X^2 = 33.54$, Degree of Freedom= 1, p value <0.0001.

DISCUSSION

Numerous internal and external elements in the individual and the environment have been linked to teenage tobacco smoking. The current study adds information about peer pressure's impact on teen substance misuse and smoking to this body of knowledge.¹⁴⁻¹⁵ According to the study's findings, adolescents used tobacco frequently (26.6%). Other surveys have revealed that 35% of young people use illicit (illegal) drugs in some way. Teenagers who use one substance are more prone to start using other drugs later on. Adolescence is a time when the search for one's identity predominates. Additionally, the person is growing in psychosocial competency at this period, including coping mechanisms. Teenagers have a hierarchy of coping methods, none of which are used entirely, according to Frydenberg and Lewis. It's unclear, though, whether these strategies are inclinations or learned behaviors that mainly stay true

over time. The study by Stein DJ et al. discovered a variety of personality characteristics that were linked to substance use. They included antisocial, neurotic, and sensation-seeking tendencies as well as self-indulgence, impulsivity, violence, and poor coping mechanisms. Drug abstainers have greater coping skills than drug users.¹⁶ Parental attitudes against substance use are insufficient; kids are less likely to adopt attitudes from parents who are emotionally distant, unsupportive, or overbearing.

For frequent drug users, the percentage of best friends who take drugs is exceptionally high, at 64.0%. The results of the current study also showed a significant association ($p < 0.0001$) between peer pressure and tobacco use. According to other studies, peer drug use and positive attitudes about substance use increase teenage substance misuse risk. According to a study by Engster SA et al., peer drinking and acceptance of drinking among peers have been linked to adolescent drinking. The most potent mediators of teenage drug use are peer pressures.¹⁷ Teenage drug use might be motivated by a variety of factors. The majority of the abusers' guilt sentiments had to do with the prohibition of drug use by either their parents, their religion, or both. These findings are unique to our societal structure, as young individuals still feel bound to their parents and their faith despite abusing drugs or alcohol.¹⁸⁻¹⁹

Limitations of the study: There is no proof of a temporal association between exposure and outcome because the study was cross-sectional, had a very small sample size, and examined exposure and outcome simultaneously.

CONCLUSION

The research has uncovered the significant relationship between peer influence and substance abuse..

Author's Contribution:

Concept & Design of Study: Sundas Hamna
 Drafting: Musarrat Jahan, Wajahat Hussain
 Data Analysis: Wajahat Hussain
 Revisiting Critically: Sundas Hamna, Musarrat Jahan
 Final Approval of version: Sundas Hamna

Conflict of Interest: The study has no conflict of interest to declare by any author.

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