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"The risk factors of tobacco use  
among Bethlehem youth"

by

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## Dedication

This work is cordially dedicated to my husband Ahmad AL-Baw Balot and my beloved children who gave me every possible chance to finish this work.

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## **Abstract**

This is school-based study to track the tobacco use among youth using a common methodology and core questionnaire, to produce representative data for students aged 15-18 years, at Bethlehem urban and rural areas. It was conducted in 13 schools where 511 respondents fill a self-administered questionnaire.

The aim of the study is to portray a clearer picture of the risk factors behaviors of school-aged students related to tobacco use and its health impact include: minors' access to tobacco, media and advertising, smoking cessation and school curriculum. This can be used to establish effective tobacco control programs in Palestine.

Questionnaire were developed to assess and monitor the ratio of cigarette and other tobacco products use, with focus on risk factors that impose youth at risk for smoking.

The results of the study raised many issues, like boys more likely than girls to use tobacco products specially those from urban areas.

A highly concerning finding is the large number of current smokers tried cigarette and other tobacco products before age of 10 years.

Data indicated that the majority of young people currently smoking desire to stop smoking and tried to stop but they can't.

The majority data support the need for youth cessation programs, also students report, they exposed to a lot of advertisements for cigarettes from a variety of media outlets, which increase the risk to use tobacco products.

Finally, high percentages of students think schools don't play enough role in educating youth about the effects of tobacco.

The overall conclusions of this study call for raising public awareness on the issue of youth tobacco use, developing state policy bringing together authorities and all interested parties in the society, with the aim of reducing the incidence of smoking among adolescents.

Recommendations for specific initiatives focused on public awareness, prevention and intervention programs.



## الخلاصة

تناولت هذه الدراسة الطلبة في المرحلة المدرسية لأقتفاء اثر ظاهرة استخدام التبغ بين الشباب من عمر ١٥ سنة الى ١٨ سنة، باستخدام منهجية البحث للعينة العشوائية، ولإعطاء بيانات حول هذه الظاهرة شملت الدراسة ١٣ مدرسة غطت كلا من منطقتي المدينة والقرية في محافظة بيت لحم، مما اسفر عنه تفاعل ٥١١ مجيباً من الطلبة قاموا بتعبئة الاستمارة التي تم تطويرها خصيصاً لهذه الغاية.

هدفت الدراسة الى تشكيل صورة اوضح حول الاسباب الكامنة وراء ظاهرة استخدام التبغ بين الطلبة، وتحري العوامل الرئيسية المؤثرة وراء انتشارها مثل توفر منتجات التبغ للاطفال، الدعاية والاعلام، الاقلاع عن التدخين، والمناهج المدرسية. حيث من الممكن استخدام نتائج هذه الدراسة في وضع برامج فاعلة للسيطرة على استخدام التبغ في فلسطين.

تم اعداد وتطوير الاستمارة لتقييم نسب استخدام السجائر والمنتجات الاخرى من التبغ بين الطلبة، مع التركيز على العوامل المؤثرة التي تدفع بهم لمخاطر التدخين.

اثارت نتائج الدراسة قضايا عديدة مثل، الذكور اكثر توجهها لممارسة التدخين ( السجائر او أي من منتجات التبغ الاخرى) من الاناث وخاصة في مناطق المدينة. من بين النتائج المقلقة للغاية ان عدد كبير من المدخنين الحاليين قد حاولوا التدخين عندما كانت اعمارهم اقل من ١٠ سنوات، كما وتشير بيانات الدراسة الى ان الغالبية من الشباب المدخنين حالياً لديهم رغبة كبيرة في التوقف عن التدخين وقد حاولوا ذلك الا انهم لم يستطيعوا. ايضاً نجد ان اغلب البيانات تدعم حاجة الشباب الماسة لبرامج الاقلاع عن التدخين، حيث انهم يتعرضون لكثير من وسائل الترويج للسجائر من خلال وسائل الاعلام المختلفة مما يزيد من مخاطر استخدامهم لمنتجات التبغ. اخيراً، النسبة الاكبر من

الطلاب يعتقدون بان المدرسة لا تلعب دورا كافيا في تعليم وتوعية الشباب بمخاطر التدخين والاثار

السلبى للتبغ.

وتدعو الاستنتاجات العامة لهذه الدراسة الى رفع مستوى الوعي العام بقضايا تدخين الشباب،

وتطوير سياسات تشارك فيها السلطات المحلية المختلفة وكل المهتمين في المجتمع بهدف تقليل

المدخنين الشباب. وقد تضمنت التوصيات مبادرات محددة ركزت على الوعي العام وبرامج الوقاية

والتدخل في مجال استخدام التبغ بين الطلبة.

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## **Chapter one**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Recently the tobacco use has become one of the world's most important topics. But, in fact, it is not a new problem, there have been warnings about the rise of tobacco users among adolescents people. Since, 1964, substantial changes have occurred in scientific knowledge of health consequences of tobacco use, much more is also known about programs and policies, that encourage non-smoking behavior among adult and protect non smokers, from exposure to environmental tobacco use. This progress has not been realized with young people.

WHO estimates that there are currently 3.5 million deaths a year from tobacco, the figure is expected to rise about 10 million by 2030. By date 70% of those deaths occur in developing countries.

Tobacco use is considered to be chief cause of preventable death in the world. WHO is concerned about the decreasing age of smoking initiation. Data revealed that in many countries, the median age of smoking initiation was under the age 18 years. This is a particular concern, since starting to smoke at younger ages increases the risk of death from a smoking-related disease. Among those who continue smoking throughout their lives, about half can be expected to die.

The onset of tobacco use occurs primarily in early adolescence, the earlier the young people begin using tobacco the more heavily they likely to use it as adult and the

longer potential time they have to the users. Therefore, adolescents and school-aged children should be a primary focus for intervention strategies.

This study is to track tobacco use among adolescents in Bethlehem, to provide a clear picture of risk factors that influence young people in their decision to use tobacco product.

With a common methodology and core questionnaire a multi-stage cluster sample design was produce as a representative data for Bethlehem schools were selected with probability proportional to enrollment size. Classes were randomly selected and all students in selected classes were eligible to participate.