

Tobacco Consumption and Drug Addiction Among Girls-Teenagers in Georgia

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ABSTRACT

In the beginning of XXI century the tobacco consumption and drug addiction are considered as the main problems of public health in the world. According to the data of WHO, there exist 1,1 billion smokers and 1/3 of them are teenagers. With the purpose of studying and estimating the real situation in Georgia on distribution of tobacco consumption and drug abuse have been carried out biographical anonymous interrogation of 300 girls - teenagers. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions. Only 45,5% interrogated never tried a cigarette. The hobby for smoking usually begins on average at the ages of 13-14. Girls-teenagers start to smoke at early age for the following reasons: 38,3% were interested directly in process of smoking; 3% - have started smoking under the recommendation of their girlfriends; 1,7 % of girls have found simplification in smoking after sincere experiences; 16,3 % have followed the lead of associates. As to drug addiction: 92,7 % mark that never were in a situation where someone suggested them to try drugs and 38 % - are confirmed with presence of addicts among familiar girls. Results of interrogation show, that serious measures are necessary on the part of the state structures in struggle against tobacco consumption and drug addiction among youth.

KEYWORDS: *tobacco consumption, drug addiction, teenagers, family income*

Today tobacco smoking is the most widespread of the known pollutants. The report of WHO provides that cigarette smoking is the chief, single, avoidable cause of death in our society. Tobacco smoking causes many serious illnesses such as cancer, pulmonary diseases and coronary disease. The new findings indicate that tobacco-related deaths would increase significantly if the trend in teenage smoking continues. There is clear evidence that teenage tobacco use continues to be a major public health problem in the world. By the mid 2020, the transfer of the tobacco epidemic from rich to poor countries will be advanced, with only about 15% of the world's smokers living in the rich countries. Health care facilities in poorer countries will be hopelessly inadequate to cope with this epidemic.

Drug addiction is a chronic, progressive, and potentially fatal disease. It is characterized by tolerance and physical dependency, pathologic organ changes or both; all of which are the direct or indirect consequences of the substances ingested.

Drug addiction causes family problems, job loss, poor job performance, public health risks, increased risk of infectious disease, and participation in crime as victims and perpetrators. Drug addiction can include the exploitation of legal drugs as well as illicit substances. Many addicts use more than one substance. This problem is particularly painful in the youth.

Tobacco consumption and drug addiction are very actual problem among the youth of Georgia and mostly among the teenage girls. According to the data many of them habitually smoke cigarette, drink alcohol, snort cocaine and swallow prescription drugs.

Conducting a "Teenage Girls Health Condition Survey" at the Department of Public Health and Management of Tbilisi State Medical University was a new initiative.

The goal of the study was to understand better girls' health problem and estimate the real situation in Georgia. We are interested in tobacco smoking and drug addiction among teenage girls. Nowadays this is extremely important problem for evaluation of health condition.

To prove the importance of the tobacco smoking and drug addiction among teenage girls, author designed the questionnaire based on American guidelines and adjusted it to the current situation in Georgia. There were 12 questions. The questionnaire was administered individually to 300 girls over a period of one year. The interview process was anonymous. The descriptive study method of survey appeared to be very effective and productive providing many interesting results (*Fig.1*).

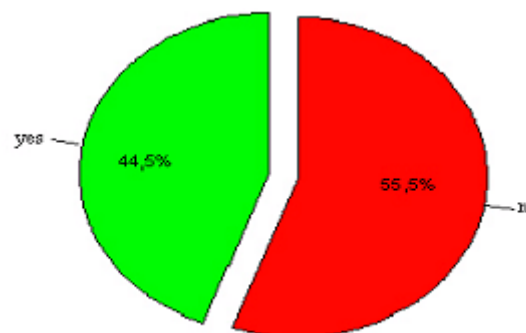


Fig.1 *The results of the survey.*

The data confirmed that 44,5% of respondents have tried a cigarette - smoking. It is very large percent of smokers among teenage girls. Nowadays young teenage girls are smoking almost as much as boys in Georgia. In last decades smoking habit become glitzy and fashionable among the girls. Tobacco use usually begins in early adolescence - on average by age 13 or 14 and in almost all cases before adulthood. By the time they reach age eighteen, many of them quickly become dependent. This is not surprising, because tobacco-delivered nicotine is highly addictive. The second question given in the questionnaire asked the age they have smoked their first cigarette. 13,3% of the interviewees answered that they were 13 years old. 11,3% - 14 years old. It is very important to understand the reason why teenage girls begin to smoke in early ages. Reasons might be various: 38.3% of respondents were interested in smoking process itself and that was the reason why they have tried their first cigarette. Only 3% has started smoking, following a friend's recommendation. 1,7% of girls was under stress and found relief in smoking.

While tobacco use is extremely dangerous for everyone, young users face special kind of risks. The earlier a person begins to smoke, the more difficult it is to quit. Early adolescent users are more likely to remain smokers for the rest of their lives, more likely to smoke heavily, and more likely to die prematurely than those who begin smoking at a later age. In addition, the earlier an individual begins smoking, the greater his or her risk of developing the numerous illnesses associated with smoking. Teens who smoke regularly experience a general decrease in physical fitness, increased coughing and phlegm, greater susceptibility to and severity of respiratory illnesses, earlier development of artery disease (a precursor to heart disease) and slower lung growth, which by adulthood can reduce the level of lung function.

To the question "What amount of your friends and acquaintances has the smoking-addiction?" 16,3%

answered that majority of them have the smoking-addiction (*Tab.1*).

When adolescents begin to smoke environmental factors is the most crucial. Risk factors include inappropriate classroom behavior or failing school performance, poor social skills or affiliation with deviant peers, and a perception that smoking is acceptable within peers, school, or community environments.

According to the data every schoolgirl can freely buy tobacco in Georgia. We do not have strong legislative base that prohibits cigarette purchasing in our country in early ages. The political, social and economic situation is very complicated and by the time Georgia became the new, cheap sell off area for European and American tobacco companies. Illegal cigarette trade has extremely increased in the recent period. Due to financial crisis Georgian government can't carry out the strong anti-tobacco campaign in the youth. That's why Georgian population and especially teens have the high rate of smoking cigarette. If youth access to tobacco is to be controlled effectively, and the decision whether to smoke delayed until adulthood, then over time, smoking will be greatly reduced as a major addiction in our society.

Very important issue is drug addiction among teenage girls. To the question "Have you heard of your teenage-girls acquaintances' drug-addiction?" 38% of respondents replied positive answer. The data represents that 92,7% of schoolgirls have never been in situation when someone offers them to try drugs.

The received information doesn't entirely describe the existing situation. This might be related to several reasons: Even the questionnaire was anonymous, adolescent sometimes afraid to tell the truth. Many users who said they'd encountered trouble in most areas still believed they were in control of their habit.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	74	24,7	24,7	24,7
	Minority	134	44,7	44,8	69,6
	Half	39	13,0	13,0	82,6
	Majority	49	16,3	16,4	99,0
	Everyone	3	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	299	99,7	100,0	
Missing	System	1	0,3		
Total		300	100,0		

Tab.1 *What amount of your friends and acquaintances has the smoking-addiction?*

The hard living condition of the recent period in Georgia formed incorrect way of adoption of population to real environment. The most part of population accustomed the wild market through deviant behavior. Many respondents are from poor families, lower social class and sometimes family can't control the child. To the question "Are you satisfied with your family income?" 22,3% of respondents replied negative answer.

Among young people those with poorer grades and lower self-image are most likely to start smoking or using the drugs. Advertising companies appease to increase adolescent's risk of smoking or drug addiction by making it look like a social benefit.

To the question: "Do you go in for sports?" 42,7% of interviewees attend only physical training at school. We think that healthy life style is very important issue for the youth. Health and medical experts suggest that we must discourage children from starting to smoke or using the drugs and the same time we have to implement healthy life style among adolescents. Every child has to take physical training exercises on regular basis if we want to avoid the tobacco disease epidemic and drug addiction.

Georgia, tobacco producers with smart advertisements and other enticing activities are trying to attract and habituate particularly the younger generation. This must

have the most undesirable impact on national health and productivity.

The youth of the country are its potential workforce. For them to lose their vitality and health from a really negative habit will be most unfortunate. Therefore, the government needs to discourage tobacco consumption through penal taxes, publicity and a host of other innovative measures. To sustain the decline in smoking prevalence, efforts must be intensified to promote cessation, to implement prevention programs that should enhance protective factors and reserve or reduce risk factors.

Georgia must make a substantial investment in fighting youth drug addiction to reclaim our tomorrows. We have to promote factual education about drugs and addictive disease. We believe Georgia needs a strong network of treatment and recovery resources focused on the unique needs of youth.

We must note that success in this field begins with an understanding of adolescent's problems, assessment of performance to meet those needs and continuous improvement. Results from this survey are very important for planning the future activities. After that we will be able to estimate the real situation, which will be beneficial for the both teenage girls and whole population.

References:

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Проблемы курения и наркомании среди девушек-подростков в Грузии

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РЕЗЮМЕ

В начале XXI в. употребление табака и наркотиков - главная проблема общественного здравоохранения в мире. По оценке ВОЗ, в мире насчитывается около 1,1 миллиарда курильщиков, из них одна треть - подростки. С целью изучения и оценки реальной ситуации в Грузии по распространению курения и наркомании проводили анкетный анонимный опрос 300 девочек - подростков. Опросник состоял из 12 вопросов. Только 45,5% опрошенных никогда не пробовали сигарету. Увлечение курением обычно начинается в среднем в 13-14 летнем возрасте. Девочки-подростки начинают курить в раннем возрасте по следующим причинам: 38,3% интересовал непосредственно процесс курения; 3% начали курить по рекомендации подруж; 1,7% девочек нашли облегчение в курении после душевных переживаний; 16,3 % последовали примеру окружающих. Что касается наркомании: 92,7% отмечают, что никогда не были в ситуации, где кто-то предлагал им пробовать наркотики а 38% - подтверждает наличие наркоманов среди знакомых девочек. Результаты опроса показывают, что нужны серьезные меры со стороны государственных структур в борьбе с курением и наркоманией среди молодежи.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: курение, наркомания, подростки, социальное положение