
Prevalence And Pattern Of Tobacco Use In Rural Area Of Peshawar

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Summary

2975 cases were studied in two villages of Peshawar District. 48.44% were found tobacco users. Out of these 43.79% were males whereas females were only 4.4%. Nasswar was being the most frequently used (64.5%) type of tobacco followed by chillum (17.5%).

Introduction

Man has used tobacco for about a thousand years¹. Once introduced, its use has seldom been eliminated, even by religious or legal proscriptions².

Tobacco smoking in the form of cigarettes and pipes is common in all parts of the world. Bidi, hookah, hooklis and chillum are other forms of smoking tobacco. Tobacco use in the smokeless form is also very common. Nasswar and pan are the common forms of smokeless tobacco use in Pakistan. Other types of chewing tobacco are loose leaf, plug, twist and fine cut.

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In Pakistan, the annual production of tobacco amounts to 70-80 million Kg. of which 85 percent is consumed within the country in various forms (smoking, chewing, nasswar, hookah etc.). Over 80 percent of the country's smokers are males aged 15 and above whereas smoking among females is relatively uncommon³.

Prevalence and pattern of use of nasswar and chewing tobacco varies in different parts of Pakistan. Use of nasswar is more common in Baluchistan and NWFP as compared to other provinces. On the other hand chewing tobacco in the form of pan is more common in Karachi and rural areas of Sind.

Tobacco use in the form of nasswar is very common in Afghanistan. In a study at Nangrahar, it was found that 80 percent of males and 20 percent of females were used to nasswar whereas 18 percent of the university students were used to this habit⁵. This study was aimed to find out the prevalence and different forms of tobacco use in rural areas of Peshawar.

Material and Methods

From January to April, 1987, a survey was planned and conducted in two villages Bela No. 4 and Deh Bahadur of District Peshawar (N.W.F.P.). These two villages are located 37 K.M. apart and have the same demographic conditions. The questionnaires were filled by qualified doctors recording name, age, sex and occupation of the respondents. The subjects were interviewed in confidence. The subjects above 10 years age of both sexes were included in the study.

A descriptive survey was designed and the population of these villages was assumed to be normal and a random sample was selected in the belief that part selected will show the relevant characteristics of the whole population.

Results

Of the total subjects (2975) studied 69.5% and 30.5% were male and female respectively. Most of the subjects were between the ages 20-60

years (Table-1). Table-2 shows the prevalence of tobacco use according to sex. In male 43.79% were found tobacco users, and in female 4.4%. Table-3 shows the pattern of tobacco use of 1441 subjects. Out of these 64.5% were using nasswar, and there is no significant difference between the chillum and cigarette users in the under-study area.

TABLE-1
DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS BY AGE AND SEX

Age groups (years)	Total	Male	Female
< 20	315	233	82
21-30	498	393	105
31-40	619	419	200
41-50	735	480	255
51-60	562	393	169
61+	246	149	97
Total	2975	2067 (69.5%)	908 (30.5%)

TABLE-2
PREVALENCE OF TOBACCO USE BY SEX

	Male %	Female %
Nasswar	23.5	2.9
Chillum	10.29	1.2
Cigarette	8.7	0.3
Hookah	0.9	0.1
Pipe	0.3	-
Pan	0.1	-
	43.79%	4.4%

**TABLE-3
PATTERN OF TOBACCO USE**

Pattern	Nos. (N:2975)	%
Nasswar	929	64.5
Chillum	251	17.5
Cigarette	242	16.8
Pipe	14	0.9
Pan	05	0.3
Total	1441 (48.44%)	100.0

Discussion

Using tobacco is practised worldwide and its introduction to any country is associated with immense health problems. Its use is widely prevalent in Pakistan.

Nasswar habituation is re-emerging in United States, England and other Western countries, while its prevalence is constantly rising in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. Sharifullah⁵ has reported that 80% of males and 20% of females were used to nasswar in Afghanistan. Our results show the prevalence of 43.79% and 4.4% of tobacco use in male and female. 64.5% of the subjects of both sexes are used to nasswar. This may be due to:-

- Low socio-economic status of the people of this area.
- Nasswar addicts believe that the use of nasswar promotes health, is less dangerous and less wasteful than other forms of tobacco.
- Some of the religious people are also using nasswar and do not consider it addiction/sin, where cigarettes smoking is considered as a bad habit, wastage of money and addiction.

- The people of N.W.F.P. especially from rural areas are highly modest, so the nasswar addicts think that a pinch of nasswar in the mouth is not seen by their elders and other relatives so that they can enjoy tobacco use secretly.
- A noticeable difference is observed as compared to the results of Sharifullah's study in Afghanistan and the factors mentioned above have more value for the people studied by Sharifullah. In addition the increase of using nasswar compared to cigarette smoking is due to the false belief that nasswar is a safe alternative to the dangerous tobacco smoking.
- Although the dangers of smoking tobacco are advertised, no such measures are taken against the use of nasswar and chewing tobacco which are associated with equally severe health hazards.

Recommendations

Government sponsored Nasswar Control Programme should be made, which should include:-

- Advertising health warnings on T.V., Radio and news papers.
- Observance of a policy of "no nasswar" during official timing.
- Prohibition of nasswar in all cinemas.
- Use of special postal stamp mark, bearing a health warning against nasswar.
- Holding of symposia and seminars on the subject of nasswar and health.

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