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Popularizing smoking among academic youth during the first years of studies

Rozpowszechnienie palenia tytoniu wśród młodzieży akademickiej pierwszych lat studiów

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For several years there have been systematic organization and educational activities carried out in many countries, also in Poland, aimed at large groups of people in order to limit the frequency of smoking. Living in environment free from tobacco smoke is a condition of maintaining good health of an individual and human population. The results of research show that it is very difficult to free oneself from smoking. Therefore, preventive actions among high school and academic youth must be particularly intensified. Health behaviour of post graduates of medical departments who will take up work in health centers in the future will be particularly under scrutiny, and there will be many followers among patients, too. The aim of this work was to establish participation of the smoking people among the first year students, during the first two months of 2008. In March 2008 all of the students of the first year of stationary and non-stationary divisions of the Department of Health Science at the Medical University of Lodz took part in the research, using an auditory survey. In total, there were 512 people on students lists. 479 of them took part in the research (93.5%). Among the 479 respondents, 34.2% (164) of the tested admitted to smoking and 65.8% (315 people) answered that in January and February 2008 they did not smoke a single cigarette. Among 308 stationary female and male students, those who smoked (88 people) made up for 28.6%, whereas among the 171 of the non-stationary tested students, those who smoked made up for 44.4% (76 people). In the group of smokers 53.7% (88 people) were the stationary students and 46.3% (76 people) were the non-stationary ones. Participation of smoking students in January and February 2008 among all of the students at the Department of Health Science was very high - tobacco smoke was inhaled by every third student.

Od kilkunastu lat w wielu krajach, w tym również w Polsce są prowadzone systematyczne działania organizacyjne i edukacyjne kierowane do dużych grup ludności w celu ograniczenia częstości palenia tytoniu. Życie w środowisku wolnym od dymu tytoniowego jest warunkiem utrzymania dobrego stanu zdrowia jednostki i populacji ludzkiej. Wyniki badań wskazują, że bardzo trudno jest uwolnić się od palenia tytoniu. Dlatego działania profilaktyczne wśród młodzieży szkolnej i akademickiej muszą być szczególnie intensywne. Zachowania zdrowotne absolwentów kierunków medycznych, którzy w przyszłości podejmą pracę w zakładach opieki zdrowotnej będą szczególnie obserwowane i naśladowane przez pacjentów. Celem pracy było ustalenie udziału osób palących papierosy wśród studentów pierwszych lat studiów w okresie pierwszych dwóch miesięcy 2008 roku. W marcu 2008 roku badaniem objęto wszystkich studiujących na pierwszych latach kierunków studiów stacjonarnych i niestacjonarnych Wydziału Nauk o Zdrowiu Uniwersytetu Medycznego w Łodzi, posługując się ankietą audytoryjną. Na listach studentów wszystkich kierunków studiów znajdowało się ogółem 512 osób. W badaniu wzięło udział 479 studentów (93,5%). Wśród 479 respondentów 34,2% badanych (164 osoby) przyznało się do palenia tytoniu, a 65,8% (315 osób) odpowiedziało, że w styczniu i lutym 2008 roku nie zapalili ani jednego papierosa. Wśród 308 studentek i studentów studiów stacjonarnych osoby palące (88 osób) stanowiły 28,6%, a wśród 171 badanych studiujących w systemie niestacjonarnym osoby palące (76 osób) stanowiły 44,4%. W grupie palących 53,7% (88 osób) studioowało w systemie stacjonarnym a 46,3% (76 osób) w systemie niestacjonarnym. Udział studentów palących papierosy w styczniu i w lutym 2008 roku wśród wszystkich studiujących na Wydziale Nauk o Zdrowiu był bardzo duży - dym tytoniowy inhalował co trzeci student.

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Introduction

For several years in many countries, including Poland, there have been systematic organizational and educational activities carried out, directed mainly at large populations in order to limit the frequency of smoking, because inhaling tobacco smoke has become a common phenomenon [4,5]. Living in environment free from tobacco smoke that includes harmful chemical compounds is a condition that allows to maintain good health of an individual and the whole population [6,16]. Research concerning spreading smoking in various groups showed that in Poland, as in many other countries, younger and younger people reach out for a cigarette [1,2,14]. Therefore any preventive actions among the young and among the students must be particularly intensive. The results of findings show that it is very difficult to free oneself from smoking tobacco [15]. Health behaviour of the medical graduates who will in future undertake work in health centers will be particularly observed and followed by their patients [8]. A popular Latin adage "Facta, non verba" (actins, not words) stresses the importance of attitudes and behaviour among the smokers of health centers workers in educating the society. It shows from the research that, among the smoking people, there is a significant number of medicine students and health centers workers [3,7,10,11]. Part of the future health centers workers begin to smoke or continues to do so during their studies [12].

The aim of the research was to establish the participation of students inhaling tobacco smoke among all of the students at the first years of the Department of Health Science at the Medical University of Lodz during the first two months of 2008 and in the past, including the chosen socio-demographic features.

Materials and methods

In March 2008 students of the first year students of all stationary and non-stationary faculties of Health Science Department at the Medical University of Lodz, using the auditory survey. On the lists of students there were 512 students in total. 479 of them took part in the study, which is 93.5% (table I).

Among the tested, 308 people (64.3%) were the students of stationary faculties, and 171 people (35.7%) were the students of non-stationary faculties. Among the respondents of stationary system, majority were women (74.0%), whereas at non-stationary faculties, women were only half of the tested people (50.3%). Collected material was evaluated statistically, using descriptive methods and methods of empirical deduction. For the description of the respondents' groups structure indices were calculated. In case of the analysed small subgroups, indices were presented in form of fraction (f), in all other cases they were expressed in percentage (%). So as to study the dependence between statistical features, independence test χ^2 was used. The power of dependence was evaluated using C-Pearson interdependence coefficient.

Results

Among the 479 of the respondents, there were 314 women (65.6%) and 165 men (34.4%). Answering the questions included in the survey, 299 students (62.4%) admitted to smoking cigarettes either now or in the past. In the group of 299 persons, 135 (45.2%) responders smoked in the past

Table I

Participation of female and male students of the Health Science Department at the Medical University of Lodz, according to the types of studies.

Udział w badaniu studentek i studentów Wydziału Nauk o Zdrowiu Uniwersytetu Medycznego w Łodzi wg rodzaju studiów.

	Type of studies		Number of students	Participants of survey	
				N	%
1.	stationary	undergraduate (I ^o)	176	165	93,7
		graduate (II ^o)	151	143	94,7
	Total stationary		327	308	94,1
2.	non-stationary	undergraduate (I ^o)	103	94	91,3
		graduate (II ^o)	82	77	93,9
	Total non-stationary		185	171	92,4
Total			512	479	93,5

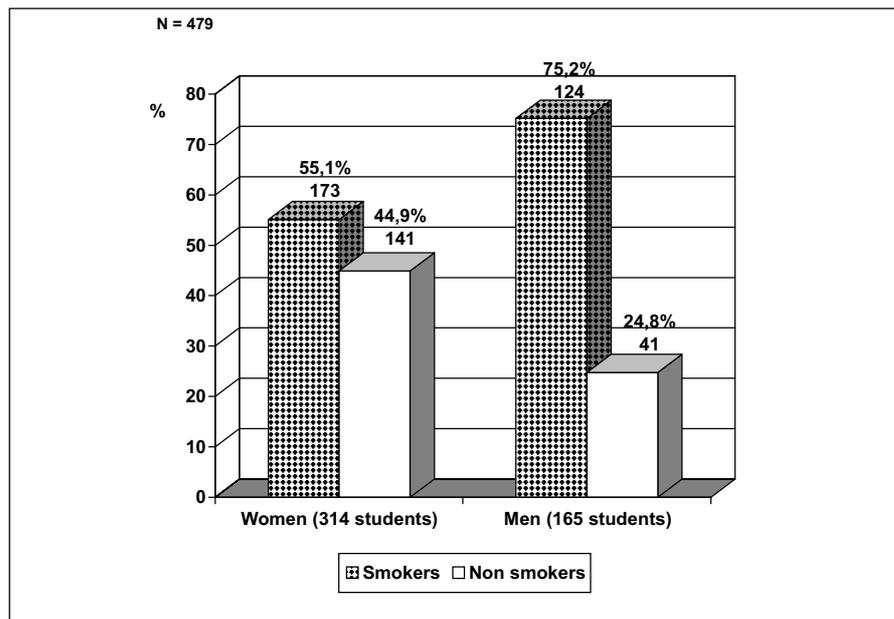


Figure 1

Behaviour of respondents concerning smoking in January and February 2008 or in the past, according to sex.

Zachowania respondentów dotyczące palenia tytoniu w styczniu i lutym 2008 roku lub w przeszłości wg płci.

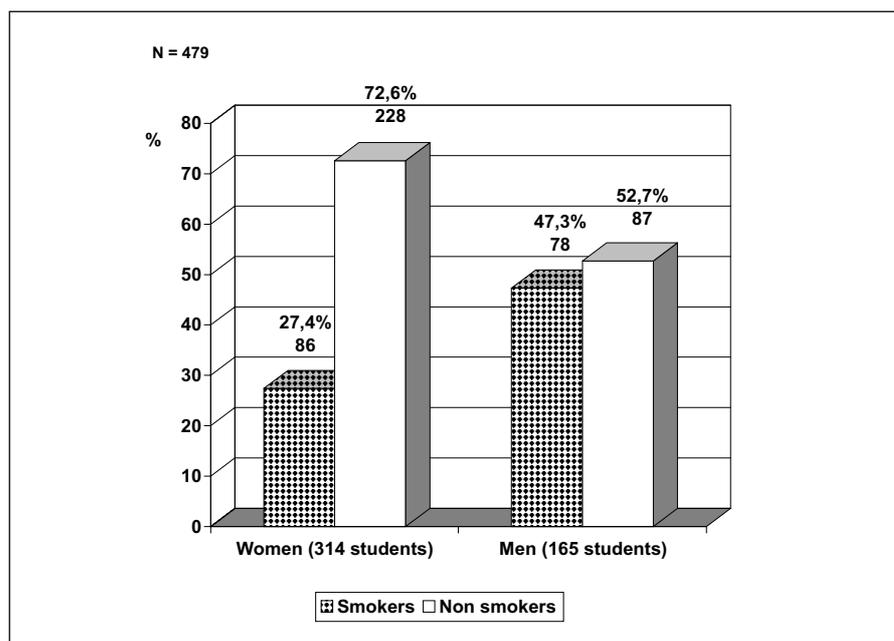


Figure 2

Behaviour of the respondents concerning smoking tobacco in January and February, according to sex.

Zachowania respondentów dotyczące palenia tytoniu w styczniu i w lutym 2008 roku wg płci.

and 164 (54.8%) smoked just before survey. Among 479 students, 180 of the surveyed (37.6%) claimed they never smoked.

In the group of 173 women (55.1%) were smokers and in the group of men 124 (75.2%) smoked cigarettes (Fig. 1).

In the group of 228 women who were stationary students, 109 of them (47.8%) admitted to smoking currently or in the past, and among 86 of the women studying in non-stationary system, 64 were smokers - f (fraction) = 0.74. In the group of 80 men studying in stationary system, 59 of them smoked ($f=0.74$), and among 85 men who were non-stationary students, 65 of the surveyed - $f=0.76$ inhaled tobacco smoke.

In the group of 479 of the surveyed, 164 people (34.2%) admitted to smoking in the time directly before the survey, that is in January or February 2008, whereas 315 of the respondents (65.8%) claimed they did not smoke at all during this time.

In the group, there were 86 women, which is 52.4% and 78 men, which is 47.6%. In the group of 314 women, 86 students smoking cigarettes made up for 27.4%, and in the group of 165 men, 78 students smoking cigarettes made up for 47.3% (Fig. 2).

At stationary faculties, 88 people admitted to smoking in January or February 2008, which is 28.6%, and at non-stationary faculties, 76 people, which is 44.4% (Fig. 3).

In the analysed period, in the group of women, there were 49 smokers (21.5%) in the stationary group, and in the non-stationary group, among 86 students, there were 37 smoking ones ($f=0.43$). In the stationary group of 80 men, there were 39 smokers ($f=0.48$), whereas in the non-stationary group, in the group of 85 men, 39 of them smoked ($f=0.46$). During the time of the research, over half of the smoking people (86 people, that is 52.4%) smoked systematically 5 cigarettes or more each day, and 39 people (23.8%) smoked over ten cigarettes (Fig. 4).

A few cigarettes, that is up to four a day, were smoked by majority of students in stationary system (49 people; $f=0.56$), and among those studying in non-stationary system, majority (47 people; $f=0.62$) smoked at least 5 cigarettes a day. Every third person studying at non-stationary faculties, smoked over ten cigarettes a day (Fig. 4).

Discussion

Smoking among the surveyed was common. Every third student (34.2%) admitted to smoking during the two months prior to the study, though in recent past up to 62.4% of the surveyed admitted.

In the group of women studying in stationary system, the participation of the smoking ones during the time of research or in the past was less as opposed to the group of men. The observed differences are relevant statistically, the power of dependence is average ($\text{Chi}^2=16,076$; $p<0,001$; $C=0,315$). Among those studying in non-stationary system, frequency of smoking currently or in recent past among male and female students was similarly high ($\text{Chi}^2=0,097$; $p>0,05$). The observed differences in frequency of smoking in all of the studied cases in January and February

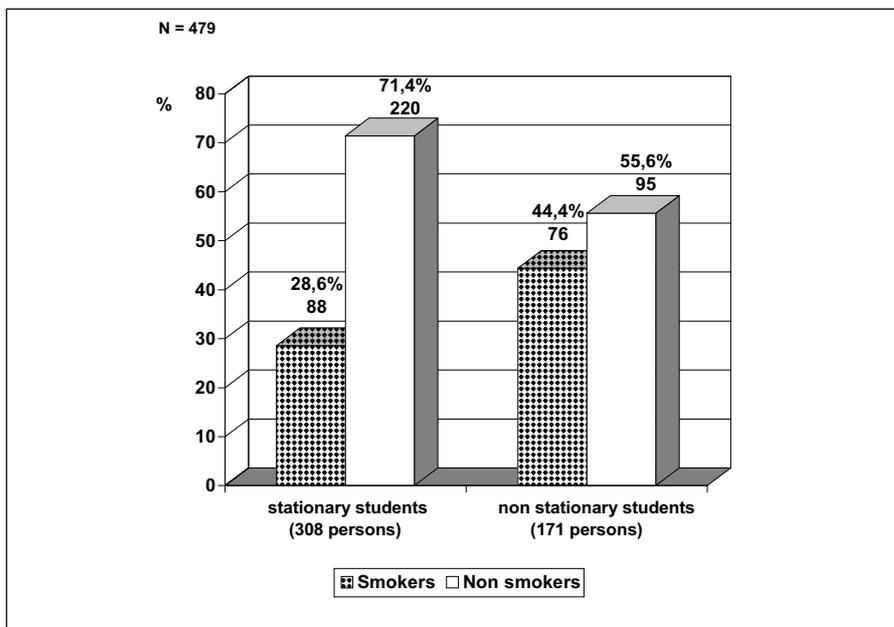


Figure 3 Behaviour of respondents concerning smoking tobacco in January and February 2008, according to the types of studies.

Zachowania respondentów dotyczące palenia tytoniu w styczniu i w lutym 2008 roku wg rodzaju studiów.

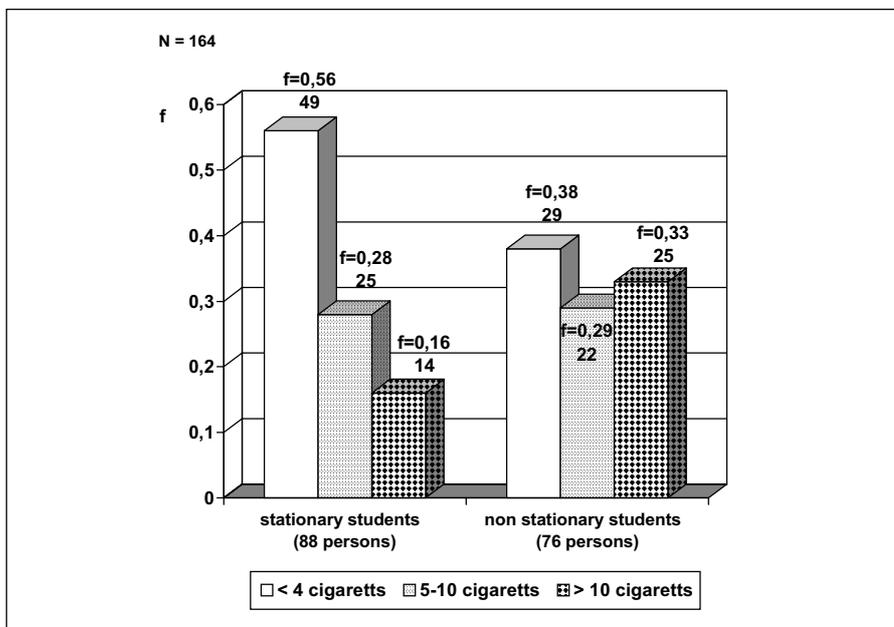


Figure 4 Structure of respondents inhaling tobacco smoke according to the number of smoked cigarettes per day in January and February 2008, and according to the types of studies.

Struktura respondentów inhalujących dym tytoniowy wg liczby wypalanych papierosów w ciągu doby w styczniu i w lutym 2008 roku oraz wg rodzaju studiów.

2008, are not in favor of men, are statistically relevant and power of dependence is slight ($\text{Chi}^2=18,994$; $p<0,001$; $C=0,276$). Among those smoking during the studies, women were in majority (52.4%), because they were the majority of all of the students (65.6%), but frequency of smoking in the group of women was less (27.4%) as opposed to the smoking men (47.3%). The difference in favoring women was 19.9 of the percentage point.

In January and February 2008 majority of smokers was among those studying in non-stationary system, power of dependence is slight ($\text{Chi}^2=12,304$; $p<0,001$; $C=0,224$). Students of the non-stationary

system indeed smoked a great number of cigarettes, that is over 10 ($\text{Chi}^2=7,585$; $p<0,03$; $C=0,297$).

From the long-term studies it can be seen that majority of smokers, after they have stopped inhaling tobacco smoke, kept coming back to smoking occasionally.

Therefore there are grounds to claim that without intensive actions directed at limiting the frequency of smoking in academic environment, to those currently smoking may in future be added those who smoked in the past and that group may be extended by those who claim they have never smoked (37.6%).

In case of young people there are great

chances of efficient change in their behaviour concerning smoking tobacco and that is why preventive actions should be started at the beginning of their studies [13]. Studies concerning smoking tobacco behaviour among the students at Health Science Department of the Medical University of Lodz were begun in 2006 [9].

Conclusions

1. Smoking tobacco among students of the first years at the Health Science Department of the Medical University of Lodz was very common. During the time of research, every third student smoked and almost 30% of the surveyed admitted to smoking in recent past.

2. There is urgent need to undertake intensive actions that would motivate the students to stop smoking and start living in environment free from tobacco smoke.

3. Including students in the specially prepared programs directed at lowering the frequency of smoking during the first years of studies would enable to increase participation of the non-smokers among the graduates of the Health Science Department of the Medical University.

4. Medical universities ought to support high schools and secondary schools in order to professionally educate students as far as benefits connected with spending time

without cigarettes are concerned, because part of their graduates will later become university students.

5. There is the need to carry out systematic research in order to recognize the changes in behaviour of students concerning smoking tobacco.

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