

Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) - Delhi

Globally everyday about 80,000-1,00,000 youth initiate smoking, most of them are from developing countries(1). About one-fifth of all worldwide deaths attributed to tobacco occur in India(2). Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) was a global study of tobacco use habits and related determinants among youth (13-15 years) around the world(3). A total of 1731 out of 2183 randomly sampled students participated in the Delhi GYTS survey, from 50 sampled schools. Major findings are summarized below:

One in 10 students (10%) had ever used tobacco in any form. Proportion of students currently using any tobacco product was 4.5% (boys: 5.5%; girls: 3.1%). Of these, the proportion of students who had chewed pan masala, gutkha or zarda in the past 30 days was 1.3%. Among them, boys had a higher prevalence than girls (boys: 2.3%; girls: 0.3%).

Less than 6 in 10 reported having learnt about the dangers of smoking and the effects of tobacco use.

Over 3 in 10 students and significantly more

boys than girls were exposed to smoke from others (passive smoking) in their home in the past 7 days.

Over 2 out of 10 students believed that boys who use tobacco have more friends. About 3 in 10 students thought smoking or chewing make boys look more attractive and over 1 in 10 students felt this for girls. However a significantly higher proportion of boys than girls felt that girls look more attractive with tobacco use.

More than 8 in 10 students had seen an advertisement or media message about cigarettes, gutkha/ pan masala or bidis on television, roadside outside on hoardings, bus or railway facilities, and shops in the past 30 days.

Only 26% of students were certain that smoking is harmful to their health.

About 4 in 10 current tobacco users reported freely purchasing tobacco products in a store.

The prevalence of tobacco use in any form among both boys and girls in this age group is in agreement with earlier published findings(4). The results indicate a definite need for including tobacco related information in the school curriculum. High exposure rates to

passive smoking require immediate policy interventions and programs to generate awareness among the public. The findings, on free access and availability of tobacco products to youth, despite there being a law in Delhi banning sale of tobacco products to anyone below the age of 18, are alarming.

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