

Trends in oral self-care and smoking habits among senior dental students in Iran

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Background:

Dental students are expected to contribute to smoking cessation counseling for their patients. Our general aim was to investigate ten-year trends in smoking habits and oral self-care among senior dental students in Iran.

Method:

The study was done in six dental schools which were chosen by stratified cluster random sampling method to have a representative sample of established (old) and new dental schools in Iran. Data was collected in four occasions in 2005, 2008, 2011, and 2015. The senior dental students were asked to voluntarily complete a self-administered anonymous questionnaire about oral self-care and smoking habits. Recommended tooth-brushing habit (RTH) was defined as at least twice a day brushing with fluoridated toothpaste. Three separate questions about cigarette, pipe and water-pipe were used to indicate smoking habits of the students.

Results:

In 2005, 2008, 2011 and 2015, 22.5% (n=60), 26% (n=52), 28.5% (n=81) and 24.6% (n=51) reported to be smokers, respectively. Female students in 2005 and 2008 occasions were more likely to report adherence to RTH compared to other cohorts. In all of the occasions, men reported smoking more than twice as women did. According to logistic regression models higher levels of fathers' and mothers' education were associated with more adherence to RTH among male students (unadjusted regression; P=0.05, OR=1.11, 95%CI= 1-1.23 and P=0.05, OR=1.12, 95%CI=1-1.25 respectively). Female students in 2005 and 2008 occasions were more likely to report adherence to RTH compared to other cohorts (unadjusted regression; P=0.006, OR=2.12, 95%CI=1.24-3.65 and P=0.013, OR=1.85, 95%CI= 1.14-3 respectively).

Conclusion:

Smoking avoidance and adherence to RTH and among senior dental students were in association with some background characteristics while it is reasonable to expect that professional training cover the differences related to background factors. The results call for more emphasis on smoking cessation and oral health behavior in dental education system in Iran.