KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF SMOKING AND NON-SMOKING DENTAL PATIENTS ON ORAL HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CIGARETTE SMOKING

A COMMUNITY DENTISTRY RESEARCH PROPOSAL
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF DENTAL SURGERY DEGREE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, 2005

BY
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LEVEL III

STUDY PERIOD: APRIL-OCTOBER 2005
COST OF STUDY: KSHS. 5,900.00
SPONSORS: SELF
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SUMMARY

In spite of tobacco’s adverse health effects, the tobacco industry is a thriving business both internationally and at the local level where it has managed to target virtually all cultures with tobacco companies recording alarmingly high profits at the expense of the health of millions of its users. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been at the forefront of worldwide activities aimed at controlling tobacco use. A recent breakthrough was reached in which a number of world governments adopted the Framework Convention on Tobacco control.

Studies have shown that 50% of Kenyan adult males use tobacco in at least one of its forms. Majority of the consumers are unaware of the magnitude of health risks associated with tobacco use. Therefore important strategies should be laid out to support the control of tobacco use such as the establishment of legal instruments to control the quality of tobacco products, limit accessibility to young persons and prescription of punishment for non compliance by tobacco manufacturers and traders.1

Despite the body of knowledge on the global effects of tobacco, more research is needed on the Kenyan situation as the current awareness of tobacco as a health problem is low.

The objective of this study is to asses the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of cigarette smokers and non smokers on the health risks associated with smoking habit. This will be a descriptive cross-sectional study of two groups of male patients; one of cigarette smokers and another of non-smokers. It is a hospital based study that will be carried out at the University of Nairobi Dental Hospital among the newly registered male patients attending the Oral Diagnosis clinic of the hospital.

A sample size of 200 patients consisting of 100 smokers and 100 non-smokers will be recruited into the study. The recruited persons will have an interview administered questionnaire. The two study groups will then be compared for the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs regarding smoking as a health risk.
The results obtained are expected to form part of the basis for identifying new target groups for preventive campaigns on the cessation of smoking. A gap in knowledge will hence be filled and will create educational mileage for related studies in the future.