

preventing youth from using substances need to target not only teenagers but younger children in primary school as well.

- Smoking is a risk factor for other drug use. Psychoactive substance use was sixteen times higher among tobacco users (16.4%) than among non-tobacco users (1%).

Based on studies conducted on substance use among youth in the USA, cigarettes are generally the first drug used by young people in a sequence that can include tobacco, alcohol and hard drugs. This pattern does not imply that tobacco use causes other drug use, but rather that other drug use rarely occurs before the use of tobacco. Cigarette smokers are also more likely to get into fights, carry weapons, and engage in high-risk sexual behaviors. These problem behaviors can be considered a syndrome, since involvement in one behavior increases the risk for involvement in others. Delaying or preventing the use of tobacco may have implications for delaying or preventing these other behaviors as well¹⁵.

- Over two-thirds (66%) of youth are exposed to environmental tobacco smoke at home or among friends, and smoking prevalence was much higher among those students. Young people with parents and siblings or friends who use tobacco were five times more likely to smoke cigarettes than those not exposed to smoking by relatives or friends.

Children often emulate parents and older siblings' behaviors, positive or not. They need to be equipped with skills for managing direct social pressures from friends, as well as indirect pressures from adult modeling and the tobacco industry marketing¹⁶. Young persons and non-users of tobacco need to be protected from environmental tobacco smoke by informing adult tobacco users of the dangers of passive smoking. Young people are likely to perceive contradictory or inconsistent messages from prevention efforts if programmes do not also address the smoking behavior of parents and other adult role models⁸.

These findings suggest that the peer group influence plays a major role in inducing cigarette-smoking habits among youth. The students do not perceive it as such however, because only 20% of them reported that they smoke to please friends. The majority, 68% reported that they smoke for fun. It may be that the majority of students have no active pressure exerted on them by their peers to smoke, but being close to a smoking peer group influences them to acquire the habit.

- Over 70% of students reported that they have teachers who smoke. These students were three times more likely to use tobacco than those whose teachers do not smoke. Two-thirds of students also reported that there were smoking regulations in their schools, but the data suggests that these rules are not strictly enforced because substance use was the same among students with and those without regulations.

Lessons learned from different countries including South Africa, Singapore, and Australia suggest that school-based interventions are not likely to be successful where teachers continue to smoke and youth are permitted to smoke on the school grounds. Smoke-free policies that involve the active participation of students, teachers, families, and parents, and address the full spectrum of intervention options are likely to be most successful⁸.

Lesotho recently adopted a non-smoking policy on all health premises to promote healthier lifestyles among workers and patients. The Ministry of Education could consider adopting this health-promoting approach in schools to encourage healthier lifestyles among teachers and protect students from environmental tobacco smoke.

- Older students aged 20 years and above had the highest smoking prevalence (14.9%). This provides an unfortunate role model for younger students and siblings.
- Two-thirds of the substance users started cigarette smoking before the age of 16 years. This is of concern, since the younger they start the more likely they are to become addicted, or become heavy smokers, and develop long-term health problems¹⁰.
- Those youth who were not aware that smoking had adverse consequences were three times more likely to use tobacco than those who were aware. This suggests that empowering students with knowledge about the impact of smoking on their health does reduce substance use significantly.

The study also suggests that greater success may be achieved through delivery of anti-smoking information through books more than through posters. These results are however, confounded with gender preferences and are not conclusive. A more elaborate study on appropriateness of materials for different audiences would be recommended instead.

- Students who believed that it was against religious principles to use tobacco were less likely to use tobacco than those who did not. This is an avenue to explore to strengthen tobacco control activities. Religion in many societies, including Lesotho, plays a key role in education, which creates additional opportunities for improving health education¹⁷. The Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) church has adopted a non-smoking policy in all of their institutions, including schools and hospitals. This is reflected in the study results, as only one SDA-affiliated student reported past use of a tobacco product. None reported current use.
- There is need for surveillance systems to monitor the tobacco trade, marketing strategies, tobacco consumption, and its contribution to the burden of disease and mortality. This information will support advocacy, programme and policy planning, and help identify resources required for tobacco control.

The background information for the report was obtained through personal contact with clinicians, and was based on recall and clinical observations. Records were scanty or not available in a readily retrievable format. For effective management of chronic illnesses, which present with challenges of coordinating care, and require closer monitoring of patients to ensure continuity of care, there is an urgent need to provide clinicians with appropriate tools to facilitate collection and sharing of clinical information. ■

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ANNEX A: Questionnaire

THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A BASELINE STUDY TO DETERMINE SUBSTANCE ABUSE MAGNITUDE IN 38 SELECTED SECONDARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS OF LESOTHO. (PILOT SCHOOLS FOR THE SMOKE-FREE SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN)

N.B.

- *This is a self-administered questionnaire.*
- *The respondents should be students only.*

INSTRUCTIONS

- *Please tick or write appropriate response in the box or dotted line.*
- *Answer all questions as required.*
- *Do not write your name in any of these pages.*
- *Be as honest as possible*

1. What is the name of your school?

2. What is your class?

1. Form A

2. Form B

3. Form C

4. Form D

5. Form E

3. What is your age? (In completed years)

4. Gender?

1. Female

2. Male

5. Religion?

- 1. LEC
- 2. RCC
- 3. ACL
- 4. METHODIST
- 5. SDA
- 6. OTHER. (Specify)

N.B. Smoking refers to smoking Dagga, Glue, Cigarettes, Snuff, Benzene etc.

6. Is there anyone who smokes in your family?

- 1. Father
- 2. Mother
- 3. Sister
- 4. Brother
- 5. None
- 6. Other (specify)

7. How many of your school friends smoke?

- 1. All of my friends.
- 2. Most of my friends.
- 3. Some of my friends.
- 4. None of my friends.

8. Where are your smoking friends located?

- 1. Village
- 2. Other schools
- 3. Same town

9. Do any of your teachers smoke?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know

10. (If yes), how do you know?

1. I have seen them smoke.

2. I have heard from others.

3. I have detected the smell of tobacco.

4. Other (specify)

N.B. Ex-smoker refers to a person who has stopped smoking for not less than six months.

11. Are you a smoker?

1. Yes...

2. No

3. Ex-Smoker

N.B. If no, please pass to Question 19.

12. If yes, what do you smoke?

1. Cigarettes.

2. Benzene

3. Glue

4. Snuff

5. Dagga

6. Mandrax

7. Other (Specify)

13. Why do you smoke?

- 1. For fun.
- 2. To please friends.
- 3. To be with it.
- 4. Other. (Specify).....

14. When did you start smoking? (State age in years)

15. When do you usually smoke?

- 1. During class hours.
- 2. During breaks.
- 3. After school.
- 4. Other. (Specify).....

16. Where do you get the money to buy whatever you smoke?

- 1. From parents.
- 2. From friends.
- 3. From relatives.
- 4. Other. (Specify)

17. Where do you usually smoke?

- 1. Toilet
- 2. Playgrounds
- 3. Under the trees
- 4. Other. (Specify)

18. Do you need to be helped to stop smoking?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Not sure

19. If ex-smoker, what made you stop smoking?

1. Helped by friends.

2. Radio messages.

3. Parents.

4. Other (Specify)

20. If you are not smoking, do you intend to start smoking?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Not sure.

21. Do you know that smoking affects your health?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Not sure.

22. Are there regulations regarding smoking in your school?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know

23. Are there any anti-smoking activities in your school?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know

24. If yes, which of these?

1. Health Education

2. Anti-smoking clubs

3. Debates

4. Composition

5. Song Competitions

6. Other (Specify)

25. What anti-smoking materials does your school have?

1. Posters

2. Pamphlets

3. Books

4. Other (Specify)

26. Are you aware that God does not like people to smoke?

1. Yes

2. No

27. How do you think smokers in your school could be helped to stop smoking?

ANNEX B: List of schools and number of respondents

SCHOOL Number of Respondents (Total: 4377)

ABIA HIGH SCHOOL	124
ADVENTVILLE HIGH SCHOOL	120
BERENG HIGH SCHOOL	154
BISHOP DE MAZENOD HIGH SCHOOL	55
CHRIST THE KING HIGH SCHOOL	89
HLOTSE HIGH SCHOOL	259
HLALELE	41
ITEKENG HIGH SCHOOL	180
JOHN MOUND	136
LESOTHO HIGH SCHOOL	209
LETSIE HIGH SCHOOL	55
LIFE HIGH SCHOOL	112
LITHABANENG HIGH SCHOOL	77
MABATHOANA HIGH SCHOOL	181
MAFETENG HIGH SCHOOL	139
MASABIELLE HIGH SCHOOL	105
MASERU DAY HIGH SCHOOL	137
MASERU HIGH SCHOOL	158
MASIANOKENG HIGH SCHOOL	198
MATIKOE HIGH SCHOOL	105
MAZENOD HIGH SCHOOL	64
MORAPELI HIGH SCHOOL	157
MORIJA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL	111
MORUTHOANE HIGH SCHOOL	27
MOSHOESHOE II HIGH SCHOOL	210
PHOMOLONG SECONDARY SCHOOL	58
QOALING SECONDARY SCHOOL	52
RANKHELEPE ST PHILLIPS	24
SEFIKA HIGH SCHOOL	182
ST BARNABAS HIGH SCHOOL	108
ST JAMES HIGH SCHOOL	162
ST JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL	180
ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL	147
THABENG HIGH SCHOOL	176
THETSANE HIGH SCHOOL	83