

Report

SURINAME

**Global Youth Tobacco Survey
(GYTS)
2009**

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Executive Summary

This report describes the prevalence, knowledge, attitude and behavior of young people regarding tobacco use, their exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, pro-tobacco as well as anti-tobacco advertisement. In addition, it reveals the extent to which these young people receive anti-tobacco information in schools. We conducted a multistage, school-based, two-cluster survey in government and private schools using a standardized questionnaire based on the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS).

Smoking prevalence was 36.0% for boys and 24.1% for girls. 12.1% of students are currently smoking cigarettes. Almost one-half of the students live in homes where others smoke, and over one-half of the students are exposed to smoke around others outside of the home; nearly one-half of students have at least one parent who smokes. Over 7 in 10 students think smoke from others is harmful to them and more than one-half of students think smoking in public places should be banned. More than 70% of boys and girls saw a tobacco advertisement, and more than 1 in 10 students have an object with a cigarette brand logo on it.

The youth prevalence of smoking is alarming; especially in the presence of an environment that supports smoking. Young people are daily exposed to ETS, tobacco advertisement and can access tobacco products easily. Immediate action is required to limit youth exposure to ETS and accessibility, issue legislation to prohibit selling smoking to minors, ban tobacco advertisement and create a supportive environment to the health of young people.

1. Introduction

Tobacco use is one of the chief preventable causes of death in the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) attributes some four million deaths a year to tobacco use, a figure expected to rise to about 10 million by 2030. By that time, 70% of those deaths will be in developing countries. Most people begin using tobacco in their teens, and recent trends indicate rising smoking prevalence rates among children and adolescents and earlier age of initiation.

The international society spearheaded by the Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI), WHO, and the Office on Smoking and Health (OSH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has been developing international programs and initiatives to combat this man-made plague, which is devastating the lives of millions of people worldwide.

In 1998 in response to countries concerns about the lack of tobacco use data for youth, WHO, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Canadian Public Health Association developed and initiated the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS). The GYTS provides systematic global youth tobacco data which can be used by countries to monitor tobacco use and meet the provision of Article 20 of the WHO FCTC.

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) which was conducted in Suriname by the Ministry of health in 2000 and repeated in 2004 and 2009, used an internationally standardized instrument that facilitates comparing youth behavior regarding tobacco use at the regional level as well as the international level.

The Suriname GYTS includes data on prevalence of cigarette and other tobacco use as well as information on five determinants of tobacco use: access/availability and price, exposure to second hand smoking (SHS), cessation, media and advertising, and school curriculum.

This study was a school-based survey of secondary school students in grades 1 – 3 conducted in 2009

Objectives of the GYTS

- To document and monitor the prevalence of tobacco-use including: cigarette smoking and current use of smokeless tobacco, cigars or pipes.
- To better understand and assess student's attitudes, knowledge and behaviors related to tobacco use and its health impact, including: cessation, environmental tobacco use, media advertising, minors access, and school curriculum.

The GYTS will attempt to address the following issues:

- Determine the level of tobacco use
- Estimate the age of initiation of tobacco use
- Estimating the levels of susceptibility to become a cigarette smoker
- Estimating the exposure to tobacco advertising
- Identifying key intervening variables, such as attitudes and beliefs on behavioral norms with regard to tobacco use among young people
- Assessing the extent to which major prevention programs are reaching school-based populations and establish the subjective opinions of those populations regarding such interventions

Suriname ratified the FCTC on 16 December 2008 and the Ministry of Health is preparing the legislation regarding tobacco free environments.

11. Methods

Study design and sampling

The GYTS uses a two-stage cluster sample design that produces representative samples of students in grades associated with ages 13-15 years in both government and private schools. In Suriname, this age range is covered by the first, second and third years of secondary school. The data extracted from the Ministry of Education documents was forwarded to CDC to draw the sample. Schools were selected with probability proportional to school enrollment size and a total of 25 schools were selected. At the second stage, classes within the selected schools were randomly selected. All students attending school in the selected classes on the day the survey was administered were eligible to participate. The school response rate was 100%; the student's response rate was 93.4%; the overall response rate was 93.4%; and 927 students ages 13 – 15 years completed the GYTS.

The questionnaire

The Suriname version of the questionnaire consisted of 61 core questions. The official language in Suriname is Dutch and it was necessary to translate the questionnaire, the parent notification form and the script for survey administrators from English to Dutch. Survey procedures were designed to protect the student's privacy by allowing for anonymous and voluntary participation. The self-administered questionnaire was administered in the classroom. Students recorded their responses on an answer sheet.

Data Collection

The Ministry of Education provided assistance in terms of issuing necessary letters to the selected schools and contacting schools.

The Research Coordinator was responsible for selecting, training and supervising the research team, members of which were mainly selected from University Students depending on experience and proximity to the location of the selected schools. Three research teams were formed, each including one Supervisor and 3- 4 researchers depending on the number of schools in each district. The supervisors of these teams reported back to the Research Coordinator on daily basis. A training workshop was conducted for the research team and they were assigned to schools and were responsible for the delivery and collection of all survey documentations.

111. Results

A total of 1,775 of the 1,901 sampled students completed the survey, representing a 93.4% overall response rate. There were 849 boys and 878 girls.

Table 1: Percent of students who had ever smoked cigarettes, percent of students who ever smoked that first tried a cigarette before age 10, and percent of students who had never smoked that were susceptible to start smoking in the next year

State	Ever smoked cigarettes, even one or two puffs	Ever smokers who initiated smoking before age 10	Percent never smokers likely to initiate smoking within a year
SURINAME	29.7 (24.5 - 35.5)	23.1 (15.8 - 32.6)	14.8 (11.8 - 18.3)
Boy	36.0 (29.5 - 43.2)	22.7 (13.2 - 36.3)	13.6 (8.5 - 20.9)
Girl	24.1 (18.6 - 30.6)	22.8 (12.7 - 37.3)	15.6 (12.5 - 19.2)

One in three (29.7%) of all students have ever smoked cigarettes, with ever smoking nearly twice as high for males (36.0%) compared to females (24.1%). One in four (23.1%) of students who ever smoked cigarettes first tried smoking at less than ten years of age, with no difference in gender.

There is no difference in gender susceptible to initiate smoking within a year and 14.8% of never smokers are likely to initiate smoking next year.

Table 2: Percent of students who were current cigarette smokers, current users of tobacco products other than cigarettes, and percent of current smokers who were dependent on tobacco products.

State	Current cigarette smoker	Currently use other tobacco products	Percent of current cigarette smokers who feel like having a cigarette first thing in the morning
SURINAME	12.1 (9.3 - 15.6)	10.2 (8.5 - 12.1)	11.7 (5.1 - 24.7)
Boy	14.0 (10.8 - 17.8)	10.9 (7.6 - 15.4)	*
Girl	10.1 (6.0 - 16.4)	8.7 (6.0 - 12.5)	*

* cell size is less than 35

One in nine (12.1%) currently smoke cigarette and one in ten (10.2%) currently use other tobacco products. The same trend is evident among current smokers and current smokers who feel like having a cigarette first thing in the morning (12.1% and 11.7% respectively). There were no differences regarding current cigarette smoker and use of other tobacco products.

Table 3: Percent of students exposed to smoke at home, exposed to smoke in public, and supported banning smoking in public places.

State	Percent exposed to smoke from others at home	Percent exposed to smoke from others in public places	Percent who think smoking should be banned in public places
SURINAME	46.6 (43.3 - 49.9)	53.3 (49.5 - 57.1)	54.1 (51.9 - 56.4)
Boy	44.2 (40.1 - 48.4)	51.4 (45.8 - 56.9)	54.3 (49.4 - 59.0)
Girl	47.7 (41.7 - 53.7)	53.8 (49.1 - 58.3)	53.9 (50.1 - 57.6)

Almost half the students were exposed to smoke from others in their homes (46.6%) and in public places (53.3%) and more than one-half (54.1%) think smoking should be banned in public places.

There were no differences by gender.

Table 4: Percent of students who were taught dangers of smoking, discussed reasons why people their age use tobacco, taught effects of using tobacco.

State	Percent taught dangers of smoking tobacco	Percent discussed reasons why people their age smoke tobacco	Percent taught about the effects of smoking tobacco
SURINAME	46.7 (40.3 - 53.2)	29.8 (25.7 - 34.3)	42.7 (37.3 - 48.2)
Boy	46.4 (39.0 - 53.9)	28.9 (25.3 - 32.7)	41.9 (35.7 - 48.3)
Girl	47.7 (40.5 - 55.0)	30.8 (25.9 - 36.2)	43.8 (38.1 - 49.6)

Less than half of all students were taught in schools during the past year about the dangers and effects of smoking (46.7% and 42.7% respectively) and 30% of all students had discussed during the past year reasons why people their age smoke. There were no significant differences by gender

Table 5: Percent of students who saw ads on billboards, saw ads in newspapers, and had an object with a tobacco company logo on it.

State	Percent who saw ads for cigarettes on billboards in the past month	Percent who saw ads for cigarettes in newspapers or magazines in the past month	Percent who have an object with a cigarette or tobacco logo on it
SURINAME	52.6 (48.0 - 57.2)	54.0 (49.3 - 58.7)	13.8 (11.8 - 16.0)
Boy	53.1 (48.8 - 57.3)	53.4 (47.0 - 59.6)	15.8 (12.7 - 19.4)
Girl	51.8 (44.8 - 58.8)	54.4 (48.9 - 59.7)	12.3 (10.5 - 14.3)

More than half of students saw pro-cigarette ads for cigarette on billboards and in newspapers or magazines in the past month. More than one in ten students has an object with a cigarette brand logo on it. There were no differences by gender.

Table 6: Percent of current smokers who want to quit, current smokers who tried to quit, and current smokers who received help to quit.

State	Percent of current cigarette smokers who desire to stop smoking	Percent of current cigarette smokers who tried to stop smoking during the past year	Percent of current smokers who received help to stop smoking
SURINAME	77.2 (62.3 - 87.4)	77.8 (55.1 - 91.0)	66.4 (55.8 - 75.6)
Boy	*	*	68.2 (52.0 - 80.9)
Girl	*	*	63.1 (43.8 - 78.9)

* cell size is less than 35

Over three-quarters (77.2%) of the current smokers want to stop smoking and almost eighty percent (77.8%) of current smokers stated that they tried to stop smoking during the past year.

More than two-thirds (66.4%) of the current smokers have ever received help to stop smoking, with no difference in gender.

Table 7: Percent of current smokers who usually buy tobacco in a store, percent of current smokers who buy tobacco in a store and were not refused purchase because of their age, and percent of all students who have been offered free cigarettes by a tobacco company representative.

State	Percent current smokers who usually buy their tobacco in a store	Percent who have been offered "free" cigarettes by a tobacco company representative
SURINAME	29.8 (21.5 - 39.6)	6.2 (4.5 - 8.6)
Boy	31.1 (20.7 - 43.8)	9.2 (6.2 - 13.4)
Girl	31.5 (21.3 - 43.8)	4.2 (2.7 - 6.5)

* cell size is less than 35

Approximately three in ten of current smokers (29.8%) purchase their cigarettes in a store, with no difference in gender. There is a significant difference by gender regarding free cigarette been offered by a tobacco company representative, where boys are twice as many as girls.

IV. Discussions

The discussions will focus on the topics presented earlier.

Tobacco use

Recent data suggests that one-fourth of ever smokers first tried their cigarettes at less than ten years of age. The study results also show that the likelihood of the burden of tobacco use will increase in the near future where 13.6% of male never smokers and 15.6% of female never smokers are susceptible to initiate smoking and an increase in prevalence regarding current users of other tobacco products.

School curriculum

The fact that more than half of the students were not taught about the dangers and effects of smoking and did not discuss the reasons that makes young people their age smoke, creates a major gap in the scope and nature of health information and instructions included in the curriculum regarding tobacco use.

Cessation

The indication that more than three-fourth of current smokers desire to stop smoking and have actually tried to stop, dictates the urgent need to establish youth – oriented counseling services and smoking cessation programs to help young smokers quit smoking.

Environmental Tobacco Smoke

Approximately half of young people (46.6%) live in home where others smoke, and more than half (53.3%) are around others who smoke in places outside their home. It is a fact that an environment conducive to smoking will encourage young people to smoke, especially if role models like parents and peers smoke. The dangers of ETS are well known by the youngsters in Suriname where more than two-third of them (70.6%) think that smoke from others is harmful to them. Therefore, this emphasizes the urgent need to advocate for legislation to ban smoking in public places.

Knowledge and attitudes

There is no gap regarding the knowledge of the harmful effects of smoking on health between never smokers and current smokers. This might lead to the conclusion that a large number of young people are aware of the harmful effects of smoking on health.

Media and advertising

The results of this study provide clear evidence that the majority of young people are bombarded with pro-tobacco messages. More than one in ten of the students are offered free samples carrying cigarette brand logo on them and even offered free cigarettes which demonstrates a clear violation for the claimed responsibility of the tobacco company concerning youth protection from smoking.

Access and availability

The ease at which young people can access cigarettes is yet another aspect that encourages those youngsters to smoke, and despite the fact that almost one-third of the current smokers (29.8%) can purchase cigarettes from stores.

V. Conclusion

The prevalence rates of tobacco use presented in this report are alarming. This study provides key intervening variables, such as knowledge, attitude and beliefs on behavioral norms with regard to tobacco use among young people, which can be used in prevention programs, such as banning smoking in schools, health awareness campaigns and extracurricular health activities.

VI. Recommendation

From the discussions above, the following recommendations are given:

- Reducing exposure to environmental tobacco smoke through banning all forms of tobacco use on school grounds and public places.
Therefore, this emphasizes the urgent need to advocate for legislation to ban smoking in public places.
- Reducing youth access to tobacco and tobacco products through issuing laws and regulations to reduce illegal tobacco sales to under 16 of age.
Besides drafting such policies, their enforcement needs to be included
- Restrict the advertisement of cigarettes smoking on billboards, newspapers, radio and television, and at the same time increase public awareness campaign on the harmful effects of smoking cigarettes, as well as other tobacco use, on the mass media.
- Promoting tobacco cessation through school-based counseling programs.