

REPORT ON GLOBAL YOUTH TOBACCO SURVEY 2009 - SWAZILAND

Introduction

The tobacco epidemic

Tobacco use is considered to be the chief preventable cause of death in the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are currently 4 million deaths each year from tobacco use. This figure is expected to rise to about 10 million by 2030. By that date 70% of those deaths will occur in developing countries. In the Americas, at least 845,000 people die from tobacco use every year. Recent trends indicate that the smoking prevalence rate among the adolescents is rising and the age of initiation is becoming younger. If these patterns continue, tobacco use will result in the death of 250 million children and young people living today, many of them in developing countries.

Despite widespread knowledge of the harm caused by smoking, only modest success has been achieved in global tobacco initiatives. Since it is clear that children and young people are now more at risk than ever before, it therefore becomes imperative that they should be a primary focus for intervention strategies. It has been observed that the African region lacks a mechanism for monitoring and tracking potential increase in tobacco use among our youth.

Tobacco use and tobacco control in Swaziland

The smoking prevalence in Swaziland is not known for adults, neither is there any existing legislation governing tobacco product and its use. Whatever byelaws or regulations may exist but these are not enforced. Tobacco products can be bought by anyone at anytime anywhere.

In response to the lack of data especially on adults tobacco use in a country like Swaziland, the World Health Organisation, in 1998, in collaboration with the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, initiated a global surveillance project of tobacco use among young people that would allow for cross country comparisons. The project, the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), uses a common methodology and protocol for collecting data on tobacco use among young people aged 13 to 15 across all countries. GYTS was intended to enhance the capacity of countries to monitor tobacco use among youth, and to guide the implementation and evaluation of tobacco prevention and control programmes and policies.

The GYTS is a school-based survey of students aged 13 to 15 years and is designed to gather information about smoking prevalence; knowledge and attitudes; media and advertising; young people's access to tobacco products; tobacco use prevention education in the school curriculum; exposure to environmental tobacco smoke; and tobacco cessation. The information obtained from the survey may be used in decision-making and develop strategies to prevent and control tobacco use among young people.

School surveys have been found to be useful tools in gathering data as they are relatively inexpensive and easy to administer, tend to report reliable results, and refusals are significantly lower than in household surveys. The most common research approach for this specific population has been the self-administered questionnaire.

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 obtain an improved understanding of and to assess learners' attitudes, knowledge and behaviours related to tobacco-use and its health impact, including: cessation, environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), media and advertising, young people's access, and school curriculum.
- To provide information to guide programming and advocacy work addressing youth tobacco use.

Content of the GYTS

The GYTS addresses the following issues:

- the level of tobacco-use
- age at initiation of cigarette use
- levels of susceptibility to become cigarette smokers
- exposure to tobacco advertising

Identifying key intervening variables, such as attitudes and beliefs on behavioural norms with regards to tobacco-use and this can be used in prevention programs strategies.

Methods

The 2009 Swaziland GYTS is a school- based survey, which employed a two staged cluster sample designed to produce a national representative sample of students in grade 7, form 1 and form 2. The first stage sampling frame consisted of all regular schools containing any of grades 7, form 1 and form 2. Schools were selected with probability proportional to school enrollment size. Thirty schools were selected.

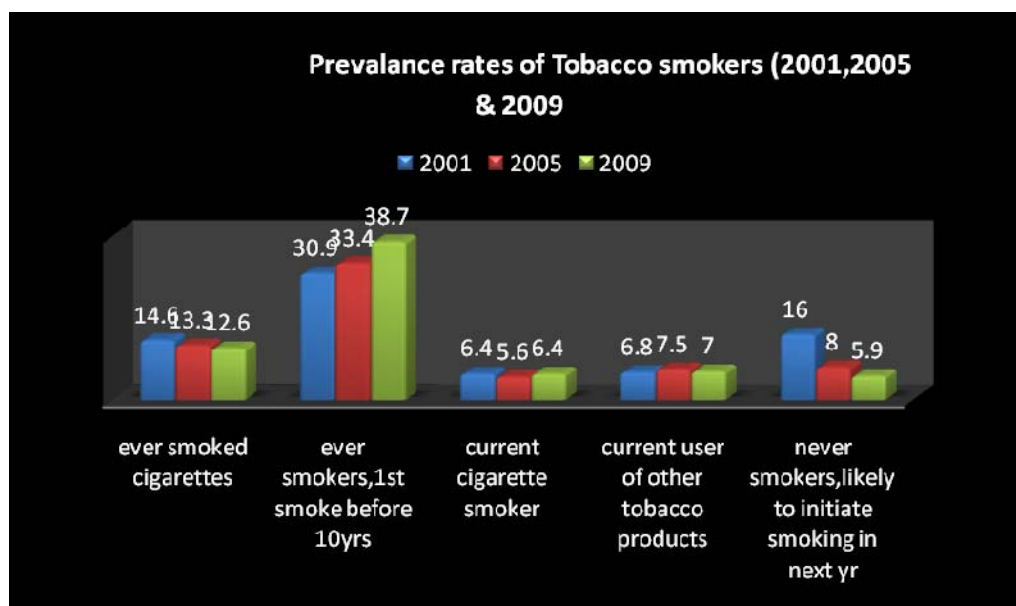
The second sampling stage consisted of systematic equal probability (with a random start) of classes from each school that participated in the survey. All classes in the selected school were included in the sampling frame. All students in the selected classes were eligible to participate in the survey.

A weighting factor was applied to each student record to adjust for non response and for the varying probabilities of selection. For the 2009 Swaziland GYTS, 1,239 questionnaires were completed in 30 schools. The school response rate was 100.0% and the student response rate was 97.0%. The overall response rate was 97.0%.

Data collection

Survey procedures were designed to protect the students' privacy by allowing for anonymous and voluntary participation. The self - administered questionnaire was administered in the classroom. Students recorded their responses directly on an answer sheet that could be scanned by a computer. The questionnaire contained 54 multiple - choice questions. All the questionnaires were in English. The field work was done from 31st March to 7th April 2009. Data collection was done by officers from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education. The total number of data collectors was 15 including site supervisors. The country has four regions. So there were four teams who conducted the survey, in which each team did one region.

Results



Source: Swaziland GYT Survey

1. Prevalence-Swaziland 2001, 2005 and 2009 (Ages 13-15)

The figure above shows the prevalence rates of youth that are smoking tobacco and other tobacco products and those that have never smoked. Almost thirteen in one hundred students (12.6%) have somehow been smoking cigarettes by 2009, showing a 2 % decline in the prevalence rate of young people who have ever smoked cigarettes since the year 2001. However, smoking is significantly higher for boy students than girl students (17.7% and 9.2% respectively).

On the other hand, survey results reveal a significant increase of (7.8%) between 2001 and 2009 in ever smokers who have initiated smoking before reaching the age of 10 years. Currently, 38.7% of ever smokers first smoked cigarettes before reaching the age of 10 years. This remains a cause for concern because the long-term health consequences of youth smoking are reinforced by the fact that most young people who smoke regularly continue to smoke throughout adulthood. There has been no change recorded among current cigarette smokers when comparing the current results to those of 2001. On the other hand, current use of cigarettes and other tobacco products has increased by 2% since 2001.

Even though there has been a significant decline by almost 10% in never smokers likely to initiate smoking since 2001 to 2009, still, 5.9% of never smokers indicated that they are likely to initiate smoking during the next year. Significantly more boy never smokers (7.2%) than girl never smokers (5.2%) indicated that they were likely to initiate cigarette smoking sometime during the next year.

2. Factors Influencing tobacco use in Swaziland

2.1 Exposure to Smoke

Table 1: Environmental Tobacco Smoke

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
SWAZILAND	23.3 (19.6 - 27.5)	55.6 (52.5 - 58.7)	67.1 (62.4 - 71.4)
Boy	21.8 (16.8 - 27.8)	52.1 (47.0 - 57.1)	68.2 (63.4 - 72.7)
Girl	24.3 (20.7 - 28.3)	58.0 (54.7 - 61.2)	66.3 (59.8 - 72.2)

Source: Swaziland GYTS 2009

Some students have been exposed to smoke in one way or the other by a person closest to them. Exposure to second hand tobacco smoke was high for most students, especially in their home and in public places (Table 1). On the other hand friends are less likely to expose students to smoke, compared to either smoking parent(s) and/or exposure in a public place. Less than two in ten students have been exposed to smoke through one or both of their parents who are smokers, while over half of all students (55.6%) indicated that they have been exposed to smoke in public places in the current year, 2009. Almost seven in ten students think smoking should be banned in public places, and both boys and girls are almost equally likely to be in favour of banning smoking in public places.

2.2. Awareness against Smoking

Table 2: School curriculum

State	Percent taught on dangers of smoking tobacco	Percent discussed reasons why people their age smoke tobacco	Percent taught about the effects of smoking tobacco
SWAZILAND	64.1 (56.7 - 70.8)	46.4 (40.4 - 52.4)	55.3 (48.5 - 61.9)
Boy	69.1 (59.9 - 77.1)	46.8 (40.2 - 53.5)	57.5 (50.7 - 64.0)
Girl	60.6 (52.2 - 68.4)	46.1 (39.2 - 53.1)	53.9 (45.5 - 62.0)

Source: Swaziland GYTS 2009

Over sixty percent (64.1%) of students indicated that they had been taught in the school during the past year about the dangers of smoking (table 2). Schools are an ideal setting in which to provide tobacco use prevention education. School-based tobacco prevention education programs that focus on skills training have proven effective in reducing the onset of smoking.

Table 3: Media and Advertising

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
SWAZILAND	62.1 (57.8 - 66.2)	54.2 (50.3 - 58.0)	8.5 (6.7 - 10.6)
Boy	61.5 (56.1 - 66.7)	49.6 (44.6 - 54.5)	9.7 (6.9 - 13.4)
Girl	62.5 (57.5 - 67.2)	57.3 (52.9 - 61.6)	7.6 (5.5 - 10.6)

Source: Swaziland GYTS 2009

Media on the other hand seems to be a major medium for raising awareness in terms of the dangers of smoking. More than seventy percent (76.3%) of students have seen an anti-smoking message through the media, calling for more media messages to disseminate information about the dangers of smoking to Swazi students. Billboards also play a significant role in communicating messages related to smoking or cigarettes, with 62.1 % students indicating to have seen pro-cigarette advertisements. The

authorities responsible may need to explore this media to ensure positive messages that are also raising awareness about the dangers of smoking rather than promoting them.

On the positive side though, it is worth noting that there has been a decline in media advertisements promoting smoking over the years, to be precise since 2001, where pro-tobacco messages were seen by 71.3% students and currently 62.1% students see such messages on billboards. The data were not statistically significant by gender. The study also explored other information education and communication (IEC) materials with a cigarette brand logo, results show that at least 8.5 % of the students possess such materials, and there has been a decline for students to have such materials since 2001, where 12% was recorded.

Cessation

Table 4: Cessation

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
SWAZILAND	*	75.3 (64.0 - 83.9)	79.7 (70.5 - 86.6)
Boy	*	*	74.4 (57.8 - 86.1)
Girl	*	*	*

*cell size is less than 35 Source: Swaziland GYTS 2009

Approximately three – quarters (75.3%) of students who are current cigarette smokers had tried to stop smoking and 79.7% of current smokers have had help to stop smoking.

In 2001, over seventy percent (73.1%) of current smokers wanted to quit smoking and by 2005 there had been a very insignificant decrease in terms of smokers who wanted to quit. During the current year, however, the Swaziland GYTS recorded a *cell size<35. On the other hand current smokers who always feel like smoking first thing in the morning are at 7.8%, recording a 2.4% decline since 2001.

Access to cigarettes or tobacco products

Table 5: Access and Availability

State	Percent current smokers who usually buy their tobacco in a store	Percent current smokers who buy their tobacco in a store and were not refused cigarette purchase because of their age	Percent who have been offered "free" cigarettes by a tobacco company representative
SWAZILAND	28.2 (17.2 - 42.7)	*	7.8 (6.3 - 9.7)
Boy	27.7 (13.1 - 49.2)	*	9.9 (6.4 - 14.9)
Girl	*	*	6.5 (5.2 - 8.1)

Source: Swaziland GYTS 2009

In the year 2005, the vast majority of smokers who purchase their cigarettes in a store (55.3%) had not been refused the sale of cigarettes because of their age, showing a 5% significant increase since 2001. At least 7.8% of all students had been offered a free cigarette by a cigarette company representative; again here the results show a significant decline by 2.8 % since 2001.

SUMMARY OF SELECTED MAIN FINDINGS/ CONCLUSION

- Overall, 6.4% of students currently smoke cigarettes (9.2% male and 4.5% female) and has shown no significant change over the years
- About 11.5% of students currently use any form of tobacco(15.8% male and 8.6% female)
- Approximately 7.0% currently use some other form of tobacco (9.5% male and 5.3% female)
- Second hand smoke exposure is moderate and nearly one –quarter of the students who live in homes where others smoke.
- Over half of the students are exposed to smoke around others outside of the home
- About 14% of the students have at least one parent who smokes
- Four out of 10 student think smoke from others is harmful to them
- Nearly seven out of 10 students think smoking in public places should be banned
- Nearly one in 10 students have an object with a cigarette brand on it
- Three – quarters of the students saw anti –smoking media messages in the past 30 days
- About six in 10 students saw pro- cigarette ads on billboards and over half saw pro- tobacco ads in newspapers and magazines in the past 30 days

Discussions, Conclusions and recommendations

The survey provides important trend data about the extent of smoking among youth as well as their attitudes and behavior towards smoking, and the impact that advertising and exposure to tobacco-related campaigns, both promoting and against smoking. This study provides important information for decision-makers and practitioners for the development of effective tobacco control policy and smoking prevention interventions aimed at youth.

Tobacco Use

The GYTS reveals that tobacco use among adolescents in Swaziland is still a problem. Even though the percentage of respondents who have ever smoked (12.6%) is the lowest record since GYTS was carried out in 2001, however there is still a lot that needs to be done to bring down the prevalence rates. The percentage of current smokers among students is also of concern (with no difference at all since 2001, 6.4%). Over the

years, a trend has been noted that boys are more likely than girls to use tobacco, but still there are some girls (5.2%) who are likely to initiate smoking in the next year.

School Curriculum

The low proportion of students, who indicated that they had received any lessons about the dangers of smoking, indicates the need to develop a comprehensive school health education program in the country that includes a strong tobacco prevention component.

Cessation

The Swaziland GYTS revealed that although most current smokers wish to quit smoking, the majority of those that have attempted to quit often fail. Again, school-based health education programs could be developed or revised to accord more attention to cessation in addition to smoking prevention. Special gender-sensitive cessation services for young people need to be established. The survey also shows that young smokers in the country have few if any constraints to buy cigarettes and more to that some company representatives offer free cigarettes to the Swazi young population.

Environmental Tobacco Smoke

The exposure of teenagers to smoke, both in the home and in public places, is high. Especially alarming is the high exposure for never smokers. Interestingly, almost seven in ten students think smoking should be banned in public places. This data indicate the need for legislation banning smoking in public places, with strong enforcement provisions.

Media and Advertising

Restrictions on tobacco advertising have proven effective in other countries as a means of reducing smoking prevalence among children. The GYTS reveals that the majority of adolescents support the application of very strict restrictions on tobacco advertising, including a total ban of smoking in public places. The government and parliament should take into account the opinion of young people and adopt comprehensive tobacco control legislation.

The Swaziland GYTS also revealed the continuing practice by the tobacco industry to offer free cigarettes to children (which is illegal according to Swaziland legislation, even for adults). This suggests the need to strengthen enforcement of the existing legislation.

Access and Availability

Strict policies need to be put in place/strengthened and enforced to ensure that tobacco suppliers adhere to the laws and regulations. The analysis need to provide evidence on both cigarette prices and tobacco control policies to explore if these can reduce cigarette demand among teenage students in Swaziland. Price simulation based on the estimates of participation price elasticity for cigarettes needs to be explored to indicate the extent of the cigarette excise tax in the country and its impact on tobacco uptake thereof.

Finally, the GYTS should be repeated periodically and become an integral part of the tobacco control and smoking prevalence surveillance system. It should also be repeated in the current sample population to examine the trends since 2009.