

Global Youth Tobacco Survey

Saint Lucia



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Global Youth Tobacco ~~S~~urvey (GYTS), sponsored by WHO in collaboration with the United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, was conducted in Saint Lucia during the months of May and June 2001.

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

The ~~Objectives~~objectives of the GYTS in St. Lucia were to:

1. ~~To D~~ocument and monitor the prevalence of tobacco use including: cigarette smoking and current use of smokeless tobacco and cigars or pipes.
2. ~~To O~~btain an improved understanding of and to assess learners-students' attitudes, knowledge and behaviours related to tobacco use and its health impact, ~~including; cessation, environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), media and advertising, young's people access and the school curriculum.~~
3. ~~To P~~rovide information to guide programming and advocacy work addressing youth tobacco use.

The purpose of the ~~Global Youth Tobacco Survey~~ GYTS is to collect data on the level of tobacco use, age at initiation of cigarette use, the levels of susceptibility to become cigarette smokers, exposure to tobacco advertising and to identify~~ing~~ intervening variables such as attitudes and beliefs on behavioural norms with regard to tobacco use which can be used ~~in~~to inform prevention and control programmes.

The Saint Lucia GYTS ~~includes~~collected data on the prevalence of cigarette and other tobacco use as well as information on six (6) ~~determinants of tobacco use related factors, namely:~~ knowledge and attitudes; access/availability and price; environmental tobacco smoke exposure; cessation; media and advertising; and school curriculum.

The Saint Lucia GYTS was ~~a school-based survey conducted among~~ of students ~~between in~~ grades 6-9 and forms 1-4.

A two-stage cluster sample design was used to produce representative data for all of Saint Lucia. At the first stage, schools were selected with probability proportional to enrolment size. At the second stage, classes were randomly selected and all students in selected classes were eligible to participate.

The school's response rate was 100 %. Student response rate was 86.2%, and the overall response rate was 86.2%. A total of 1737 students participated in the survey.

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education collaborated in collecting data. Health and Family Life educators distributed questionnaires to students.

The questionnaire was self-administered. It consisted of 71 questions which were close ended ~~and addressed the .—The major variables mentioned above, were prevalence, knowledge and attitudes, access and availability, environmental tobacco smoke, cessation, media and advertising and school.~~

The results of the survey showed that 35% of students had ever smoked cigarettes and male students were more likely to smoke than females. Smoking initiation began before age 10 among 29.2% of the students and 13% of ~~non-smokers~~non-smokers were susceptible to initiating smoking within the next 12 months. One in three students who had never smoked felt that boys who smoked had more friends.

A small percentage of students who were smokers perceived that boys and girls who smoked had more friends. Students smoked at home and elsewhere, but female students were more likely to smoke at home. With regards to purchasing cigarettes in a store, students had no difficulty.

A large percentage of students were exposed to environmental tobacco smoke and felt strongly that a ban should be placed on smoking in public places ~~and a significant .—A large~~ percentage of students who smoked had a desire to stop smoking. A small percentage however, had attempted to stop smoking during the course of the year. Exposure to media and advertising messages, both pro and anti-con., can be considered high. Almost half of the students were taught in school about the dangers of smoking and ~~fewer a smaller number had~~ discussed the reasons why people their age smoked.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations ~~were~~are made:

1. A comprehensive tobacco control programme should be developed, implemented and evaluated, including:

a) Legislation banning

- smoking in public places

- ~~3. • Legislation banning~~ the sale of tobacco products to minors and single cigarettes ~~should be promulgated~~

- advertising and promotion of tobacco products in all media, and

4.b) Development and implementation of a youth cessation programme.

~~5. Legislation banning advertising and promotion of tobacco products in all media should be promulgated.~~

6.2. The GYTS Survey be repeated every three years to ascertain trends and effectiveness of ~~Tobacco~~tobacco Control~~control~~ initiatives.

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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

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Saint Lucia is one of the four Windward Islands, situated between Martinique to the North and St. Vincent to the South (62° W and 13.6° N). It is a volcanic island with an area of 238 square miles.

The population of Saint Lucia in 1999 was estimated at approximately 153,819 persons¹.

The Government of Saint Lucia is a democratically elected.

The economy is based primarily on Agriculture, Tourism, Small Manufacturing and Financial Services.

Tobacco consumption is one of the major causes of mortality in the world. The World Health Organisation estimates that four million persons die annually from tobacco consumption.

Unchecked, tobacco related deaths, would be approximately 10 million persons annually, by the year 2030.

In the Region of the Americas, tobacco use causes at least 845,000 deaths annually². Non-communicable diseases, including cancer and heart disease, are responsible for nearly two-thirds of all deaths in Latin America and the Caribbean³. One third of all deaths ~~of~~ from cancer and heart disease are related to tobacco use in Latin America and the Caribbean⁴.

Notwithstanding the global tobacco epidemic, tobacco consumption is increasing in Saint-Lucia *(is there hard evidence to back this up? If not, it might be better to say something like "the perception of health workers is that tobacco consumption.....")*. Similar to sexual initiation, tobacco initiation commences early in children, usually in the pre-adolescent stage of development in Saint Lucia. It is a common practice for parents who smoke to allow their children to purchase cigarettes for them at grocery or liquor shops. A study on adolescent health among .. to .. year olds (insert ages, to facilitate understanding of why the results are so different regarding ever smoking) in Saint-Lucia indicated that 11.2% of students included in the survey had smoked a cigarette and less than 1% of the students in the survey smoked cigarettes monthly or more frequently in the year preceding the survey⁵.

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The Ministry of Health, The St. Lucia Cancer Society and the Ministry of Education have been involved in educating young persons and the general public on the ill effects of tobacco

consumption. In 1993, the Government of ~~Saint-~~ Lucia, by a ~~cabinet-Cabinet~~ decision, banned smoking in all health facilities. The following year the ban was extended to all public buildings. ~~Some r~~Restaurants and other business places have voluntarily placed no-smoking signs in their premises. Consequently, small gains have been made in the tobacco control programme in ~~Saint-~~ Lucia.

In response to the lack of data on youth tobacco use around the world, in 1998 the World Health Organisation, 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. ~~The~~ 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. By mid 2001, the GYTS had been completed in 45 countries and was ~~in processing in~~ an additional 46 countries.

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) is a school based survey of students aged 13 to 15 years. It 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; ~~price of cigarettes;~~ exposure to environmental tobacco smoke; and tobacco cessation. The information obtained from the survey will be used in decision making and to develop strategies to prevent and control tobacco use among young people.

The GYTS had focused on ~~school-based~~school-based surveys because they are useful tools in gathering data, ~~as they and~~ are relatively inexpensive and easy to administer. They also tend to report reliable results and refusals are significantly lower than household surveys. The research approach used was the self-administered questionnaire.

The ~~Objectives-objectives~~ of the GYTS in St. Lucia were:

1. To document and monitor the prevalence of tobacco use ~~including;including~~ cigarette smoking and current use of smokeless tobacco and cigars or pipes.
2. To obtain an improved understanding of and to assess ~~learners-students'~~ attitudes, knowledge and behaviours related to tobacco use and its health impact, ~~including; cessation, environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), media and advertising, young's people access and the school curriculum.~~
3. To provide information to guide programming and advocacy work addressing youth tobacco use.

~~The purpose of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey is to collect data on the level of tobacco use, age at initiation of cigarette use, the levels of susceptibility to become cigarette smokers, exposure to tobacco advertising and identifying intervening variables such as attitudes and beliefs on behavioural norms with regard to tobacco use which can be used in prevention programmes. (Repetitive)~~

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The implementation of GYTS is proceeding at the same time that the member states of the World Health ~~Organisaton~~Organisation are negotiating the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), an international treaty to coordinate world wide efforts to reduce tobacco use and exposure to second hand smoke.

In addition to guiding national policy and programming strategies, the results of the GYTS will provide invaluable data to monitor progress toward many of the provisions ultimately contained within the FCTC.

METHODS

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~~The Saint Lucia GYTS includes data on the prevalence of cigarette and other tobacco use as well as information on six (6) determinants of tobacco use. Knowledge and attitudes; access/availability and price; environmental tobacco smoke exposure; cessation; media and advertising; and school curriculum. (*Repetitive*)~~

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The Saint Lucia GYTS was a school-based survey of students ~~between-in~~ grades 6-9 and forms 1-4. The survey was conducted ~~between-in~~ May and June 2001.

-A two-stage cluster sample design was used to produce representative data for all of Saint Lucia. At the first stage, schools were selected with probability proportional to enrolment size. At the second stage, classes were randomly selected and all students in selected classes were eligible to participate.

The school's response rate was 100 %. Student response rate was 86.2%, and the overall response rate was 86.2%. A total of 1737 students participated in the survey. In the analysis of the data, cells that are less than thirty-five (35) are not reported and are identified by an asterisk.

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education collaborated in collecting data. Health and Family Life educators distributed questionnaires to students.

The questionnaire was self-administered. It consisted of 71 questions which were close ended. The major variables were prevalence, knowledge and attitudes, access and availability, environmental tobacco smoke, cessation, media and advertising and school curriculum.

RESULTS

1.0 Prevalence

~~Almost~~ Approximately 1 in 3 of the students (35.5%) have smoked cigarettes at some time in their lives. (Table 1). Prevalence of ever smoking was significantly higher for male students (45.3%) than female students (27.7%). Students who had smoked cigarettes in Grade 7 (44.5%) were significantly higher than students in Grade 6 (18.7%). A higher percentage of students (43.8%) age 16 smoked compared to those age 12 years (24.4%). A smaller number (14.3%) used some type of tobacco product. Current use of any tobacco product is significantly higher for male students (18.5%) than ~~in~~ for female students (10.1%).

Table 1: Percentage of students who used tobacco

Category	Ever Smoked Cigarettes, Even one or two puffs	Current Use				Never Smokers- Susceptible to Initiating Smoking
		Any Tobacco product	Cigarettes	Other tobacco Products	Smoking Frequent Cigarette	
Total	35.5 (±2.6)	14.3 (±1.9)	9.7 (±1.6)	7.7 (±1.7)	29.2 (±4.0)	13.0 (±1.8)
Sex						
Male	45.3 (±4.6)	18.5 (±3.5)	13.5 (±3.2)	9.6 (±2.4)	31.1 (±5.3)	16.5 (±4.5)
Female	27.7 (±3.3)	10.1 (±2.2)	6.5 (±1.9)	5.6 (±1.7)	27.8 (±5.4)	11.5 (±2.4)
Grade						
6	18.7 (±8.5)	11.4 (±4.5)	6.7 (±4.1)	7.0 (±3.4)	*	12.3 (±4.8)
7	44.5 (±17.1)	22.6 (±14.5)	13.9 (±13.1)	13.2 (±9.8)	*	*
8	29.2 (±10.9)	22.8 (±12.6)	9.6 (±5.9)	18.0 (±12.9)	*	19.0 (±11.1)
9	*	*	*	*	*	*
Form						
1	33.3 (±7.3)	15.3 (±4.5)	11.5 (±4.4)	8.9 (±2.8)	36.4 (±8.1)	13.4 (±3.8)
2	36.4 (±4.3)	15.7 (±4.8)	11.5 (±3.8)	7.8 (±3.9)	24.9 (±8.5)	13.3 (±3.6)
3	39.5 (±4.7)	13.7 (±5.2)	9.9 (±4.4)	6.2 (±2.9)	32.1 (±7.8)	15.5 (±5.9)
4	38.9 (±10.1)	8.8 (±2.7)	6.2 (±3.1)	4.2 (±1.7)	21.9 (±9.7)	9.1 (±4.7)
Age						
12	24.4 (±9.2)	14.5 (±4.9)	8.4 (±3.9)	8.5 (±3.4)	37.3 (±13.6)	13.3 (±5.4)
13	29.4 (±6.5)	13.7 (±5.8)	8.3 (±4.1)	8.7 (±3.9)	43.8 (±12.4)	10.6 (±4.3)
14	33.3 (±4.8)	12.5 (±3.3)	9.3 (±3.1)	6.8 (±2.6)	33.6 (±7.5)	14.0 (±4.1)
15	39.6 (±5.4)	14.1 (±5.8)	10.4 (±4.8)	6.3 (±3.2)	23.6 (±7.8)	14.3 (±5.7)
16	43.8 (±7.4)	15.7 (±4.7)	10.5 (±3.7)	8.4 (±3.5)	22.4 (±8.2)	12.6 (±4.5)

* = Cell < 35

Overall, almost ten percent (9.7%) of students smoked cigarettes during the past 30 days. ~~For~~ Sstudents who currently smoked (smoked 1 or more days in the past 30 days), ~~it were~~

significantly higher ~~for~~ among male students (13.5%) than female students (6.5%). A small percentage of students (7.7%) had used ~~other~~ types of tobacco other than cigarettes, such as Before age ten, 29.2% of the students had smoked cigarettes. *(Is this a deduction, or is there a table? Apologies if I missed this information in the table, but I can't seem to find it...)*. Amongst students who had never smoked, 13% were susceptible to initiating smoking. *(What about frequent smokers (smoked cigarettes 20+ days of the past 30 days)? We should probably say something about them.)*

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2.0 Knowledge and Attitudes

Among ~~s~~ Students who had never smoked, ~~34.4%~~ (34.4%) felt that boys who smoked had more friends. That perception was significantly higher among students in form one (37.2%) than students in form four (17.7%). Among ~~t~~ Those who were current smokers, ~~(44.8%)~~ felt that boys who smoked had more friends. A significant difference regarding this belief exists among male students who never smoked (31.7%) and male students who were current smokers (49.6%). (Table 2).

For female students who were ~~never on~~ smokers, 20.1% felt that girls who smoked had more friends and among those who were current smokers, ~~23.5~~ 20.4% felt that girls who smoked have more friends.

Table 2: Knowledge and Attitudes

Category	Think boys who smoke have more friends		Think girls who smoke have more friends		Think smoking makes boys look more attractive		Think smoking makes girls look more attractive	
	Never Smokers	Current Smokers	Never Smokers	Current Smokers	Never Smokers	Current Smokers	Never Smokers	Current Smoker
Total	34.4 (±3.7)	44.8 (±6.9)	20.1 (±2.8)	23.5 (±6.9)	9.2 (±2.5)	14.1(± 6.6)	8.8 (±2.4)	10.3 (±4.6)
Sex								
Male	31.7 (±6.0)	49.6 (±11.2)	20.5 (±4.1)	25.0 (±10.7)	10.9 (±3.3)	20.3 (±9.9)	10.4 (±3.7)	16.5 (±7.0)
Female	35.7 (±4.9)	37.3 (±11.3)	20.1 (±4.3)	20.4 (±8.5)	9.0 (±3.1)	6.7 (±6.4)	8.1 (±2.4)	1.7 (±3.3)
Grade								
6	35.8 (±10.3)	*	19.9 (±8.3)	*	17.1 (±12.6)	*	17.4 (±11.4)	*
7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
8	41.2 (±12.5)	*	27.6 (±16.7)	*	26.7 (±12.2)	*	24.6 (±16.9)	*
9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Form								
1	37.2 (±7.1)	*	20.6 (±5.0)	*	14.4 (±6.1)	*	12.3 (±5.0)	*
2	39.4 (±7.2)	36.1 (±13.4)	23.7 (±5.6)	24.4 (±14.7)	7.0 (±3.0)	13.1 (±11.1)	7.0 (±3.0)	6.6 (±7.0)
3	29.2 (±8.9)	*	14.6 (±4.3)	*	3.0 (±3.2)	*	3.5 (±2.9)	*
4	17.7 (±9.3)	*	13.3 (±6.5)	*	2.2 (±3.1)	*	2.9 (±3.4)	*
Age								
12	33.4 (±8.6)	*	20.2 (±7.4)	*	12.9 (±4.4)	*	13.8 (±5.3)	*
13	38.6 (±7.6)	*	19.1 (±8.1)	*	16.3 (±10.2)	*	13.6 (±9.7)	*
14	38.0 (±7.3)	44.1 (±15.9)	25.4 (±6.3)	*	6.9 (±2.9)	17.1 (±12.0)	7.9 (±3.1)	*
15	33.2 (±7.4)	*	16.1 (±4.1)	23.5 (±16.8)	8.9 (±4.2)	11.0 (±11.9)	7.2 (±3.9)	2.4 (±5.1)
16	26.4 (±7.1)	*	17.3 (±6.3)	*	5.1 (±4.2)	*	2.8 (±3.3)	*

* = Cell < 35

Among students who never smoked 9.2% think smoking makes boys look more attractive. **The** **This** perception of students in form one (14.4%) was higher than students in form four (2.2%). Among students who smoked, 14.1% think that smoking makes boys look more attractive. **Among s**Students who never smoked, 8.8% think smoking makes girls look more attractive. The perception of form one students (12.3%) was higher than form four students (2.9%). Among current smokers 10.3% think smoking ~~maker~~ **makes** girls look more attractive. A significant difference exists between male current smokers 16.5% and female current smokers (1.7%) as it relates to thinking ~~that~~ smoking makes girls look more attractive.

3.0 Access and Availability

One in three students (33.1%) who were current smokers usually smoked at home. Female students were more likely to smoke at home (50.6%) than male students (22.5%).

Approximately 14% of students who were current smokers purchased cigarettes in a store (14.1%). Most of those students who were current smokers, despite being under age, had no difficulty in purchasing cigarettes from a store (67.5%). (Table 3)

Table 3: Access and Availability

Category	Percent Current Smokers who Usually Smoke at Home	Percent Current Smokers who Purchased Cigarettes in a Store	Percent Current Smokers Who Bought Cigarettes in a Store Who Were Not Refused Because of their age
Total	33.1 (±9.0)	14.1 (±6.5)	67.5 (±9.9)
Sex			
Male	22.5 (±11.5)	18.0 (±9.8)	68.2 (±10.3)
Female	50.6 (±12.4)	7.4 (±5.5)	63.1 (±19.3)
Grade			
6	*	*	*
7	*	*	*
8	*	*	*
9	*	*	*
Form			
1	*	*	*
2	38.7 (±15.9)	25.5 (±14.4)	*
3	*	*	*
4	*	*	*
Age			
12	*	*	*
13	*	*	*
14	*	*	*
15	*	17.0 (±11.4)	*
16	*	*	*

* = Cell < 35

4.0 Environmental Tobacco Smoke

Among students who were non-smokers, 22.8% were exposed to smoke from others in their home. Of those who were current smokers, 49.6% were exposed to smoke from others in their home. Thus, students who are exposed to smoke in the home from others are significantly higher among current smokers (49.6%) than non-smokers (22.8%).

Exposure to smoke from others in public places is significantly higher among current smokers (78.4%) than students who never smoked (52.6%).

Table 4: Environmental Tobacco Smoke

Category	Exposed to smoke from others in their home		Exposed to smoke from others in public places		Percent think smoking should be banned from public places		Definitely think smoke from others is harmful to them	
	Never Smokers	Current Smokers	Never Smokers	Current Smokers	Never Smokers	Current Smokers	Never Smokers	Current Smoker
Total	22.8 (±1.9)	49.6 (±8.0)	52.6 (±3.2)	78.4 (±6.4)	80.2 (±3.1)	70.5 (±8.4)	87.5 (±2.7)	65.2 (±8.1)
Sex								
Male	22.9 (±3.5)	56.6 (±10.6)	55.1 (±5.0)	81.8 (±9.2)	80.6 (±4.6)	66.9 (±12.5)	85.9 (±4.0)	63.7 (±11.7)
Female	22.7 (±2.7)	41.6 (±11.3)	51.3 (±3.8)	75.0 (±10.4)	80.3 (±4.2)	80.8 (±10.7)	88.2 (±3.8)	68.0 (±10.0)
Grade								
6	21.7 (±4.4)	*	45.6 (±5.9)	*	68.6 (±12.1)	*	78.9 (±7.9)	*
7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
8	35.3 (±16.8)	*	42.8 (±14.7)	*	70.9 (±13.0)	*	62.9 (±27.2)	*
9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Form								
1	18.5 (±5.9)	*	50.0 (±9.3)	*	72.5 (±13.6)	*	86.9 (±7.7)	*
2	22.5 (±4.2)	39.7 (±14.9)	55.4 (±4.3)	78.4 (±8.5)	84.9 (±4.8)	75.0 (±16.1)	90.1 (±3.4)	78.3 (±9.2)
3	23.1 (±6.1)	*	55.4 (±9.0)	*	84.6 (±5.6)	*	89.7 (±7.3)	*
4	23.8 (±5.8)	*	55.1 (±9.5)	*	91.9 (±5.3)	*	97.5 (±2.7)	*
Age								
12	18.5 (±6.7)	*	44.3 (±5.9)	*	76.2 (±8.2)	*	85.9 (±5.1)	*
13	26.8 (±5.7)	*	53.2 (±5.8)	*	77.5 (±6.5)	*	87.4 (±3.7)	*
14	21.1 (±5.6)	54.7 (±19.3)	56.0 (±6.4)	78.6 (±11.7)	80.9 (±7.9)	69.6 (±13.0)	88.1 (±6.0)	72.4 (±13.0)
15	21.5 (±6.5)	52.9 (±15.4)	49.8 (±7.3)	81.9 (±11.3)	81.2 (±6.8)	78.0 (±13.4)	86.7 (±5.9)	69.6 (±14.0)
16	26.8 (±6.6)	*	56.8 (±7.9)	*	84.9 (±6.0)	*	89.4 (±8.9)	*

* = Cell < 35

Among students who never smoked, 80.2% think smoking should be banned from public places. The perception of students in form four (91.9%) was significantly higher than students in form one (72.5%). Students who were current smokers had a similar inclination (70.5%). Thinking that smoking should be banned from public places is significantly higher among female students who are current smokers (80.8%) than male students who are current smokers (66.9%).

The perception that smoke from others is harmful to them is significantly higher among students who never smoked (87.5%) than those who were current smokers (65.2%). Students in form four who never smoked (91.9-97.5%) had a stronger perception of the harmful effects of cigarette smoke than students never smokers in form one (86.9%).-(Table 4).

5.0 Cessation

Among current smokers, a large percentage of students (75.7%) had a desire to stop smoking and. ~~Among the students who smoked~~, 5.5% tried to stop during the course of the year. Male students (7.5%) were more inclined to stop smoking than female students (3.9%). (Table 5)

Table 5: Cessation

Category	Current Smokers	
	Percent desire to stop	Percent tried to stop this year
Total	75.7 (± 10.7)	5.5 (± 1.1)
Sex		
Male	78.2 (± 16.3)	7.5 (± 2.0)
Female	*	3.9 (± 1.3)
Grade		
6	*	*
7	*	*
8	*	*
9	*	*
Form		
1	*	*
2	*	*
3	*	*
4	*	*
Age		
12	*	*
13	*	*
14	*	*
15	*	*
16	*	*

* = Cell < 35

6.0 Media and Advertising

A large percentage of students (81.5%) saw anti-smoking media messages in the past thirty days. Among students who never smoked, 53.9% saw pro-tobacco messages in newspapers and magazines in the past thirty days. Among sStudents who were current smokers, 59.4% were exposed to pro-tobacco messages in the similar period. Students who had an object with a cigarette brand logo on it was significantly higher among current smokers (36.4%) than ~~non-~~ever smokers (12.9%). Among ~~non never-~~smokers it was significantly higher in more -male students (17.9%) than female (10.0%) ~~to have had~~ an object with a cigarette brand logo on it. Students who were offered free cigarettes by a tobacco company was significantly higher among current smokers (24.0%) than non-smokers (10.1%). (Table 6)

Table 6: Media and Advertising

Category	Per Saw Anti-Smoking Media Messages	Percent Saw Pro-Tobacco Messages in newspapers and magazines		Percent who had object with a cigarette brand logo on it		Percent offered “free” cigarettes by a tobacco company	
		Never Smokers	Current Smokers	Never Smokers	Current Smokers	Never Smokers	Current Smokers
Total	81.5 (±2.6)	53.9 (±3.6)	59.4 (±10.0)	12.9 (±2.2)	36.4 (±9.6)	10.1 (±1.8)	24.0 (±6.1)
Sex							
Male	78.9 (±3.0)	51.9 (±5.1)	59.7 (±14.3)	17.9 (±3.4)	30.7 (±10.6)	13.6 (±3.6)	30.6 (±10.2)
Female	84.2 (±3.4)	54.9 (±4.5)	57.6 (±11.1)	10.0 (±2.2)	40.8 (±13.7)	8.1 (±2.2)	15.1 (±9.4)
Grade							
6	76.3 (±12.2)	58.2 (±11.9)	*	10.2 (±5.5)	*	11.3 (±8.3)	*
7	79.5 (±9.3)	*	*	*	*	*	*
8	80.1 (±7.4)	54.9 (±13.6)	*	10.4 (±8.8)	*	7.6 (±6.7)	*
9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Form							
1	77.0 (±8.0)	57.7 (±9.9)	*	10.2 (±3.5)	*	7.7 (±3.1)	*
2	83.5 (±4.2)	49.7 (±7.1)	50.6 (±21.2)	14.1 (±4.2)	30.1 (±13.8)	10.6 (±3.1)	18.3 (±7.4)
3	83.2 (±3.9)	50.8 (±6.7)	*	16.1 (±6.3)	*	9.4 (±4.5)	*
4	84.6 (±5.5)	51.6 (±5.2)	*	11.4 (±3.8)	*	7.1 (±4.0)	*
Age							
12	81.3 (±7.4)	58.6 (±6.2)	*	10.5 (±6.1)	*	14.6 (±7.3)	*
13	76.8 (±6.2)	52.3 (±9.9)	*	15.3 (±5.1)	*	7.7 (±3.9)	*
14	83.5 (±4.9)	50.7 (±5.5)	61.4 (±14.3)	11.2 (±4.3)	*	9.5 (±3.2)	*
15	83.0 (±3.7)	55.9 (±7.2)	53.1 (±19.7)	12.8 (±4.6)	*	9.5 (±4.1)	17.4 (±13.2)
16	82.1 (±5.1)	52.7 (±4.4)	*	15.1 (±5.8)	*	8.2 (±4.8)	*

* = Cell < 35

7.0 School Curriculum

Students who were taught the dangers of smoking accounted for 55.9%. A smaller amount (42.2%) discussed reasons why people their age smoked. (Table 7)

Table 7: School Curriculum

Category	Percent taught dangers of smoking	Percent discussed reasons why people their age smoke
Total	55.9 (±4.0)	42.2 (±4.6)
Sex		
Male	54.5 (±4.8)	39.3 (±4.9)
Female	57.7 (±5.4)	44.2 (±5.8)
Grade		
6	61.3 (±15.7)	45.5 (±18.2)
7	47.7 (±13.7)	34.7 (±13.9)
8	47.3 (±11.5)	46.3 (±12.9)
9	*	*
Form		
1	50.8 (±10.7)	33.7 (±5.9)
2	54.3 (±10.5)	39.4 (±11.5)
3	56.8 (±9.2)	45.2 (±9.6)
4	62.8 (±6.2)	49.6 (±12.2)
Age		
12	60.0 (±12.2)	45.6 (±11.8)
13	55.7 (±7.0)	39.8 (±6.9)
14	50.2 (±9.0)	36.3 (±8.5)
15	57.1 (±6.4)	41.7 (±7.1)
16	60.8 (±5.9)	50.7 (7.0)

* = Cell < 35

DISCUSSION

Tobacco consumption and its health implications must be understood from the premise that tobacco smoke contains substances that are carcinogenic and has deleterious effects on the consumer as well as individuals exposed to environmental tobacco smoke. In addition, tobacco also contains nicotine that is highly addictive.

The survey has shown that just over one in three students smoked cigarettes and that males are more likely to smoke than females. The relatively low prevalence of tobacco consumption among students in Saint Lucia does not mean that tobacco consumption is not a problem. As a matter of fact, when one considers that 13% of non-smokers are likely to smoke in the coming year, a caveat needs to be raised, as there is the potential for the problem to be exacerbated.

The early initiation of tobacco use among students, although moderately low (~~29.2%~~) must be of concern to education administrators, parents and health officials. The data revealed that before age ten, 29.2% of students were initiated to tobacco consumption. The factors facilitating this early initiation need to be explored. However, it is a common practice for smokers who are parents to engage their children in purchasing cigarettes for them. It must be noted, that there is an attraction to smoke even among students who are non-smokers. Protecting our youths from tobacco addiction must be a priority of policy makers in Saint Lucia. It is essential, therefore, that consideration be given to the adoption of legislation prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to minors.

Access to purchasing cigarettes from a store is easy. Consideration needs to be given to the imposition of taxes and the prohibition of the sale of single cigarettes and packets to minors. Research has shown that price increases encourage some people to stop smoking; prevent others from starting and reduce the number of ex-smokers ~~that from~~ resuming⁶. A tax imposition has another beneficial impact. Revenue derived from the taxes can be used to fund tobacco control and educational programmes⁷.

It would appear that smoking at home is prevalent particularly among female students. As to whether parents are aware that their children smoke is a matter of conjecture and needs to be explored further. However, parents should, or need to, monitor the activities of their children.

Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke is higher among students who smoke than non-smokers. However, in the home, both groups are exposed, although smokers are more likely than non-smokers. Students, as well as the general public, need to be educated on the harmful effects of environmental tobacco smoke.

ETS exposure is high for students and there is a strong perception that smoking should be banned from public places as it has a harmful effect on others. The United Kingdom Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health (1998) concluded that exposure to environmental tobacco smoke is a cause of lung cancer, and in those with long term exposure, the increased risk is in the order of 20-30% ⁸.

The desire to stop smoking is significantly high among current smokers and small attempts have been made by students to stop. The prevalence of smoking in school and at home is not known and this poses a challenge both to school administrators and parents. The data however, should ~~elucidate alert significant~~ persons to the fact that students are engaged in smoking tobacco and some would like to quit. Supportive systems ~~would have to~~ should be in place in order to facilitate those students who are desirous of stopping.

Although the study showed a significant amount of the students exposed to anti-smoking messages in the media, one should be careful in drawing conclusions that this is the norm. The writer is of the opinion that this high percentage (81.5%) may be due to the heightened awareness created by the Ministry of Health and Cancer Society in observance of World No Tobacco Day, May 31, 2001. The study was undertaken during the month of May and June 2001.

Pro-tobacco messages in the media and tobacco paraphernalia can impact negatively on normative minds. It is essential that some form of legislation be promulgated to ban tobacco advertising in the media and the offering of tobacco objects to minors. ~~Research has shown that comprehensive bans on cigarette advertising and promoting can reduce smoking.~~ Research has shown that comprehensive bans on cigarette advertising and promotion can reduce smoking⁹.

Education of students on the dangers of smoking needs to be intensified. The proposed Health and Family Life Education policy, which is being drafted, should consider, inter alia, tobacco education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. -A comprehensive tobacco control programme should be developed. This programme should include:

a. a.—Legislation banning

- smoking in public places

- b. ~~Legislation banning~~ the sale of tobacco products to minors and the sale of single cigarettes

- e. ~~Legislation banning~~ advertising and promotion of cigarettes and tobacco products in all media

b. d.—Development and implementation of a youth cessation programme

2. The Global Youth Tobacco ~~survey~~ Survey should be repeated every three years to ascertain trends and effectiveness of tobacco control initiatives in Saint Lucia.

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