

## SMOKING HABITS OF URBAN SCHOOL CHILDREN

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A survey was conducted in 1986/1987 to determine the smoking habits and knowledge regarding health hazards of smoking in urban school children. 1122 males and 431 females, 11-18 years were interviewed from 5 randomly selected schools from the Kandy and Senkadagala electorates.

31% of males and 4.1% of females gave a history of smoking at least once. The prevalence of current smoking among males was 7.2% (81). The maximum prevalence was at 17 years (13.1%). There was only 1 current smoker among 431 females. 9.9% (8) of male smokers were daily smokers. 90.6% of smokers smoked less than 5 cigarettes a day. 8.6% of male smokers felt that they would definitely continue to be smokers in the future. Among males 36% of smokers had 47.1% of non smokers were unaware of the health hazards of smoking. 45.1% of females were also unaware of the health hazards of smoking. The need to smoke in the company of friends was cited as the main reason for smoking by 46.9% of male smokers.

The results of this study show that the prevalence of smoking in urban school children is less than that reported for children of comparable ages from other developing and developed countries (1.4). In a study carried out in a rural community in Meerut district in India, the prevalence of smoking was 17.5% for 10 - 14 year old males and 90% for those above 15 years. In a survey done in 1000 school children aged 11 - 16 years in Finistra, Brittany 2 37% were current smokers and 4.3% smoked daily. In a study of 509 school children in Mugnano, a suburb of Naples in Italy, 3, 22% of children reported being current smokers and 20% reported being occasional smokers.

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## References:

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