

### **A-38: Habits and attitudes towards smoking at the end of the medical course at Peradeniya**

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The objective of this study was to find out the habits and attitudes of medical students towards smoking, at the end of their medical school education. A questionnaire was given to 126 medical students, about to sit the Final MBBS examination at Peradeniya Medical School. Out of the total sample, 14.3%(18/126) were smokers and 19.1%(18/94) of all males were smokers. Majority (90-100) believed that smoking is, either definitely the major cause or one of the causes for coronary heart disease, lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, peripheral vascular disease and peptic ulcer. Only 55.6% smokers, 85.5% non-smoking males and 65.6% females accepted that smoking is a cause for oropharyngeal cancer. Majority (more than 60%) believed that pipe smoking is least harmful compared to cigarettes, beedi and cigars. 77.8% smokers, 92.1% non smokers and all females will encourage all their patients/friends to give up smoking whenever possible and 77.8% smokers were displeased with their own smoking habits. 88.9% of smokers wanted to give up smoking. 61.1% smokers, 80.3% non smoking males and 31.3% females said that medical education

has influenced their smoking behaviour. Smoking behaviour of their fathers had only a slight positive influence on their habit, eventhough 41% fathers were smokers. Alcohol consumption was more prevalent (80.9% males and 12.5% females) than smoking. 84.6% of females said that their husbands should refrain from smoking. But 65.6% females will encourage their husbands to give up or lessen the habit only if he is suffering from an ailment attributable to smoking. It is clear that medical students at the end of their medical education have more negative attitudes towards smoking than towards alcohol.