

Shisha use amongst students

Ouédraogo and colleagues^[1] from Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso describe the knowledge and use of Sisha smoking in students in Burkina Faso, in this issue of the *AJTCCM*. Tobacco smoking is most commonly associated with cigarette smoking, but a number of other ways of consuming tobacco exist. Sisha smoking (also called hookah or hubbly bubbly) uses tobacco smoke generated by burning tobacco over charcoal which is then cooled by water, and inhaled through a long pipe or hose. It has been prevalent in oriental and third world countries for many years, before cigarette smoking.^[2] Like modern day e-cigarettes, the effects of alternative forms of smoking tobacco may be perceived by the public, as less harmful. It is therefore interesting to ascertain what the attitudes of the public towards this form of smoking, are. Students represent a young group of people that may be vulnerable to societal influence, and their view may describe a picture of the views of tobacco-smoking in society, in general.

Ouédraogo and colleagues^[1] find that there is an overall high prevalence of Sisha smoking (38.5%) in their area, a finding which correlates with other studies in Africa, and elsewhere.^[3,4] High school students however, tended to have a lower prevalence of Sisha smoking, as found in a study in Ethiopia.^[5] Interestingly, medical students tend to have a better knowledge of the dangers of tobacco use, and tend to smoke less. One study in Saudi Arabia found that only 1.6% of medical students smoked Shisha, once a week.^[6] As expected, peer pressure plays an important role in influencing Shisha smoking, as with other forms of tobacco use.

The study as with the many other studies from Africa is a starting point to finding out attitudes and prevalence of Shisha smoking, but

more will be needed in future, to ascertain the role of interventions in decreasing overall tobacco use in our society if we are to have any impact on overall health care.

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