

PREVALENCE OF SMOKING AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SMOKING STATUS AMONG MALE STUDENTS ATTENDING THE UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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Abstract. Smoking is a serious public health problem in Malaysia. The aims of this study were to determine the prevalence of smoking among full-time, undergraduate male students attending the Universiti Sains Malaysia and identify sociodemographic factors associated with their smoking status in order to inform smoking control programs for this study population. Study subjects in this cross-sectional study were chosen by stratified random sampling. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews following a structured questionnaire asking about subject smoking habits and their sociodemographic characteristics. Exclusion criteria for study subjects were lifelong learning students due to their part time status. Ordered probit analysis was used to identify factors associated with smoking status. A total of 450 subjects were included in the study; 52% were non-smokers (did not smoke any cigarettes), 14% were casual smokers (smoked ≤ 5 cigarettes daily) and 34% were compulsive smokers (smoked > 5 cigarettes daily). In our study, factors significantly associated with a greater chance of smoking were Malay ethnicity ($p < 0.001$), third year of study ($p = 0.005$), majoring in the arts ($p < 0.001$), having a part time job ($p < 0.001$), and having parents ($p = 0.043$) or siblings ($p < 0.001$) who smoke. The factors associated with smoking status were being Malay, working on a part time basis, majoring in the arts, having a monthly household income of $\geq \text{RM}8001$, having a maternal education of secondary level and having a sibling who smoke. These factors should be taken into consideration when developing anti-smoking programs for the study population.

Keywords: cigarette smoking, prevalence, sociodemographic factors, smoking status, male university students, Malaysia

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