



Smoking and Second-Hand Smoke Prevalence and Attitudes among Dental Faculty Staff and Students



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Introduction

There is no safe level of secondhand smoke and conclusive evidence exists about the association between life threatening disease and passive smoking. Breathing even a little secondhand smoke can be dangerous. Secondhand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, 200 of which are toxins and 43 are carcinogens. Those who have heart disease and/or asthma are particularly susceptible to exposure to secondhand smoke exposure (US Surgeon General report 2006). Passive smoking, according to the recent global assessment of the burden of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), is still one of the most important threats to public health (Oberget al., 2011)

Objective

This study examined smoking rates and attitudes towards second hand smoke among staff and students of the Dental Faculty at SEGi University, Malaysia.

Materials & Methods

An anonymous questionnaire survey was distributed to all students, academic and non-academic staff members. Survey questionnaire is adapted from Survey of perceptions and attitudes: Universities Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use and the Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute (FAMRI), developed in consultation with Roswell Park Cancer Institute and the University of Southern California, Institute for Global Health.

Questions about smoking status and behavior

Which statement best describes you?

	n	%
Presently smoke cigarettes	5	3.40
Never smoked cigarettes	138	93.88
Quit smoking cigarettes less than 1 year ago	1	0.68
Quit smoking cigarettes more than 1 year ago	3	2.04

How many cigarettes do you currently smoke each day?

5 people smoke		
Range	1-10 per day	
Average	6.4 per day	

How many cigarettes do you smoke at this university each day?

5 people smoke		
Range	1-5 per day	
Average	2.6 per day	

If you smoke at this university, where do you smoke?

Please select all that apply.		
	n	%
a. In my office or work area	0	0.00
b. In stairwells or corridors	1	20.00
c. In lounges or student areas	0	0.00
d. In dormitory rooms	0	0.00
e. In classrooms or lecture halls	0	0.00
f. In restrooms	0	0.00
g. In university restaurants or cafeterias	1	20.00
h. Outside the building	1	20.00
i. Smoking zone	5	100.00

How likely is it that you would *not* smoke at this university if smoking were banned?

	n	%
a. Very likely	3	60.00
b. Somewhat likely	0	0.00
c. Somewhat unlikely	0	0.00
d. Very unlikely	2	40.00

Exposure to Second Hand Smoking

How often do you smell tobacco while you are at this university?

	n	%
a. Very frequently	58	39.46
b. Frequently	57	38.78
c. Infrequently	24	16.33
d. Never	8	5.44

How do you think a smoking ban at this university would affect your job/academic performance?

	n	%
a. Greatly improve	95	64.63
b. Slightly improve	21	14.29
c. Greatly worsen	3	2.04
d. Slightly worsen	3	2.04
e. No effect	25	17.01

How do you think a smoking ban at this university would affect its public image?

	n	%
a. Greatly improve	116	78.91
b. Slightly improve	15	10.20
c. Greatly worsen	2	1.36
d. Slightly worsen	3	2.04
e. No effect	11	7.48

How easy is it for you not to smoke at this university?

	n	%
a. Very easy	107	72.79
b. Easy	5	3.40
c. Fair	8	5.44
d. Difficult	3	2.04
e. Very difficult	8	5.44

Attitude Questions

A university should be a smoke-free environment.

	n	%
a. Strongly Disagree	6	4.08
b. Somewhat Disagree	0	0.00
c. Neutral	8	5.44
d. Somewhat Agree	10	6.80
e. Strongly Agree	123	83.67

Tobacco smoke is dangerous for nonsmokers' health.

	n	%
a. Strongly Disagree	3	2.04
b. Somewhat Disagree	1	0.68
c. Neutral	1	0.68
d. Somewhat Agree	4	2.72
e. Strongly Agree	138	93.88

I would like to see this university become smoke-free.

	n	%
a. Strongly Disagree	5	3.40
b. Somewhat Disagree	1	0.68
c. Neutral	7	4.76
d. Somewhat Agree	7	4.76
e. Strongly Agree	127	86.39

A smoking ban would be unfair to smokers.

	n	%
a. Strongly Disagree	85	57.82
b. Somewhat Disagree	16	10.88
c. Neutral	26	17.69
d. Somewhat Agree	11	7.48
e. Strongly Agree	9	6.12

The smoking habits of employees of this university influence others.

	n	%
a. Strongly Disagree	4	2.72
b. Somewhat Disagree	2	1.36
c. Neutral	25	17.01
d. Somewhat Agree	34	23.13
e. Strongly Agree	81	55.10

The smoking habits of students of this university influence others.

	n	%
a. Strongly Disagree	5	3.40
b. Somewhat Disagree	2	1.36
c. Neutral	17	11.56
d. Somewhat Agree	37	25.17
e. Strongly Agree	86	58.50

A smoke-free policy is difficult to enforce.

	n	%
a. Strongly Disagree	35	23.81
b. Somewhat Disagree	11	7.48
c. Neutral	32	21.77
d. Somewhat Agree	40	27.21
e. Strongly Agree	28	19.05

Have you seen people smoking	YES		NO	
	n	%	n	%
In office or work areas	39	26.53	108	73.47
In stairwells or corridors	141	95.92	6	4.08
In lounges or student areas	48	32.65	99	67.35
In dormitory rooms	52	35.37	95	64.63
In classrooms or lecture halls	22	14.97	125	85.03
In restrooms	92	62.59	55	37.41
In university restaurants or cafeterias	103	70.07	44	29.93
Outside the buildings	139	94.56	8	5.44

Results

The response rate was 88.0% (147 Individuals) and 6.1% respondents had smoked more than 100 cigarettes in their life and 3.4% were current smokers. Current smokers averaged 6.4 cigarettes per day and smoked 2.6 per day on campus. Smoking on campus occurred mainly in smoking zones, outside buildings, in the cafeteria, in stairwells and corridors. When asked whether they would continue to smoke on campus if smoking was banned, 60% said they would continue. Only 40.1% of respondents knew that smoking is allowed in designated areas. A large number of respondents reported that they had seen people smoking in stairwells or corridors (96.0%), outside buildings (94.6%), University restaurants and cafeterias (70.1%), restrooms (62.6%), dormitory rooms (35.37%), lounges and student areas (32.7%), a smaller number of respondents had observed smoking in office or work areas (26.5%) and class rooms (14.9%).

A majority of respondents believed air quality to be fair (45.58%) while 34.7% stated it was poor. and Almost 40% of respondents said that they smell second hand smoke very frequently or frequently (38.78%). On the other hand, a large majority (78.9%) said that a smoking ban would greatly improve the public image of University and a majority (64.6%) believed it will greatly improve their job or academic performance. There is strong agreement that tobacco smoke is dangerous for smokers and nonsmokers' health (93.88%), and 89.4% would like to see university going smoke free but there was a mixed opinion about how a smoke free policy might be enforced.

Conclusion

Smoking prevalence in the sample was low. It is clear that there is considerable support for a smoke-free policy in the university but there must be adequate education and consultation.