

EXPOSURE TO PARENTAL SMOKING AND THE RISK OF SMOKING UPTAKE IN PUPILS

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Background and Aims. There is increasing evidence that contact with other smokers, particularly in the family, is a strong determinant of risk of smoking uptake. Aim of the study was to acquire information about the pupil's smoking habits and parent's use of and attitudes toward tobacco in order to assess the presence of early risk behaviors in pupils.

Methods. Population data, initiation and smoking behavior of pupils, smoking habits of cohabiting family were collected by an anonymous and semi-structured self-administered questionnaire. The research involved 281 pupils (M: 49.8% F: 50.2%) of a primary school in Catania between 6-12 years of age.

Results. The 6.0% of the pupils had already tried to smoke tobacco, males (10.7%) significantly more numerous than females (1.4%), aged between 7-12 years (M: 9.1a; F: 10.0A). The 2.1% of pupils were occasional smoker, usual smokers are only males (M: 6.0%, F: 0.0%), aged between 7-12 years. The 47.7% of pupils living with family smoking, 21.7% of households only the father smoker (M: 20.7% F: 22.7%), and in the 7.5% only the mother (M: 9.3%, F: 5.7%), while in the 17.1% smoked both parents (M: 18.6% F: 15.6%). Pupils who have tried smoking and living in households where the parents smoking (10.6%) were significantly more numerous compared to peers who had already had the same experience (2.0%) but living with family Non-smoking. Finally, the students who live with smokers smoking family amounted to 4.5%, while non-smokers who live with family are the 1.3%.

Conclusions. We note, with concern, that the smoker initiation involved a significant percentage of school children - part of which says smoking - half of which is exposed "to smoke" in a familiar environment. Still, the smoking habits of family members seem to favor the smoker testing of pupils being however an entirely avoidable health risk.

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