

Predictors and Prevalence of Tobacco Smoking During Covid-19 among University Students

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One of the world's most critical public health challenges is the tobacco consumption. Tobacco is a demerit good which has enormous cost in terms of health and productivity loss for Bangladesh. The main objective of this paper is to study university students' smoking behaviors and evaluate the factors that influence them. This paper also contributes to measuring the level of consciousness and awareness among university students regarding smoking under the present Covid-19 situation. Both qualitative and quantitative methodology is used to conduct the research. A cross-sectional analysis with random sampling method was conducted at East Delta University. A self-directed survey was designed to gather information from 229 students to analyze the predictors of tobacco smoking and their associations with it. Data analysis methods included descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics. To assess all of the predictors, we used SPSS software version 20. Our findings revealed that 21.4% of the respondents were smokers, and most respondents (78.6%) were non-smokers. From the analysis, we found that gender and age are statistically significant demographics, with p-values less than 0.05. This means that smoking status is related to both gender and age. The primary drivers of smoking tobacco initiation were stress and the influence of friends, with family members of tobacco smokers playing an important indirect influence in initiation. Tobacco use has also been linked to serious illness and death from a variety of respiratory illnesses. With the ongoing coronavirus situation the study aimed to find if they are aware about the severity of smoking and Covid-19. The finding suggests that Covid-19 does not play an important role to quit smoking amid Covid-19. In terms of public policy along with imposition of high tax, mass awareness campaigns, anti-smoking commercials via LED billboards and ads or pop-ups on social media networks and inclusion of health awareness components in primary and secondary curriculum may contribute significantly to mitigate this global concern.

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