OP 28: Alcohol consumption and tobacco smoking in an urban adult Sri Lankan population

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Background: Data on the prevalence and patterns of alcohol consumption and smoking in the general population in Sri Lanka are scarce.

Objective: To describe patterns of alcohol use and smoking in an urban adult population in Sri Lanka. Design, setting and methods: A random sample of the general population aged between 35-65 years, resident in the Ragama Medical Officer of Health area was interviewed to obtain drinking and smoking habits.

Results: Among 2985 subjects [males 45.5%; mean age 52.7 years (SD7.8)], 1156(39.7%) reported ever use of alcohol, and 892(29.7%) reported current use. 58.8% of males and 5.7% of females were current drinkers. 190(14%) males and 12(0.7%) females consumed alcohol above the weekly safe limit (>14 units for males, >7 units for females). The median duration of alcohol use among ever users was 18 years (interquartile range 10-25), and current users was 20 years (interquartile range 1,0-25). The commonest type of alcohol consumed was arrack (n=492), followed by beer (n=217). 60.2% of males and 2.1% of females reported ever smoking, 483(16.2%) were current smokers. 35.1% of males and 0.5% of females were current smokers. The median duration of smoking was 20 years among both ever smokers (interquartile range 10-27.3), and current smokers (interquartile range 15-30). Most (55.3%) smoked cigarettes, only 36(4.2%) smoked beedi. The median pack years of current smokers was 4,5 (interquartile range 2-10). Conclusion: Lifetime and current use of alcohol and smoking are high among males. Focused interventions are required to reduce current rates among males and to maintain low rates reported by females.