“ILLICIT USE OF TOBACCO” - A STREET PLAY TO SPREAD ANTITOBACCO 
AWARENESS AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC ATTENDING TAGORE 
DENTAL AND MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITALS, CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

Tobacco is the foremost preventable cause of death and disease in the world today, killing half of the people who use it. In the South-East Asia Region (SEAR), smoking prevalence ranges from 29.8% to 63.1% among men and 0.4% to 15% among women. The practice of tobacco needs attention. World No Tobacco Day is the event dedicated to call attention towards the impact of tobacco use on public health and reduce individual tobacco dependence. The day is further intended to draw attention to the widespread prevalence of tobacco use and to negative health effects. This study was conducted to create and spread anti-tobacco awareness among the general public who are the victims of using tobacco products. Mainly, the awareness is created by stressing the ill effects and illicit use of any form of tobacco through street play conducted daily for a week in the hospital premises. The pre-intervention assessment revealed poor knowledge scores on various aspect of harmful effects of tobacco, which significantly improved after intervention. As a result, the street play in local language and pictorial posters proved to be an effective health educational tool amongst illiterates and repeated use, before the transition season, for maximum impact.

KEYWORDS: Street Play, Anti-Tobacco Awareness, World No Tobacco Day

INTRODUCTION

“Tobacco has been variously hailed as a gift from the god a miraculous cure – all for life’s physical ills , a solace to the lonely solider or soiled , a filthy habit, a corrupting addiction and the greatest disease producing product known to man”[1]. Tobacco is the foremost preventable cause of death and disease in the world today, killing half of the people who use it. Globally, it kills nearly 6 million people, of which nearly 0.6 million premature deaths can be attributed to exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS), which is a mixture of the smoke given off by the burning end of tobacco products (side-stream smoke) and the mainstream smoke exhaled by smokers. If current trends continue, by 2030 tobacco use will kill more than 8 million people worldwide each year. It is estimated that 80% of these premature deaths will occur among people living in low and middle income countries. Over the course of the 21st century, tobacco use could kill a billion people or more unless urgent action is taken. As per the Report on Tobacco Control in India (2004), nearly 8-9 lakh people die every year in India due to diseases related to tobacco use. Furthermore, up to one in five deaths from tuberculosis (TB) could be avoided if TB patients did not smoke [2].
World No Tobacco Day is the event dedicated to call attention towards the impact of tobacco use on public health and reduce individual tobacco dependence. Governments of all the countries across the world are imposing strict regulations on tobacco products. World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) is observed around the world every year on May 31. It is intended to encourage a 24-hour period of abstinence from all forms of tobacco consumption around the globe. The day is further intended to draw attention to the widespread prevalence of tobacco use and to negative health effects, which currently lead to nearly 6 million deaths each year worldwide, including 600,000 of which are the results of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke. The member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) created World No Tobacco Day in 1987. In the past twenty years, the day has been met with both enthusiasm and resistance around the globe from governments, public health organizations, smokers, growers, and the tobacco industry [3].

Effective health care delivery depends on the education, training and appropriate orientation towards community health. Street playing is one of the aids used to supplement health education for spreading messages among community members. Using this technique we can’t convey large volume of message, but can improve the level of understanding concerning some specific problem or health related event in a particular area. Hence this study was contemplated with an aim to assess the effectiveness of street play in creating awareness of tobacco hazards among rural population of Chennai.

**AIM AND OBJECTIVE:**

- To assess the effectiveness of street play in creating awareness of tobacco hazards among rural population of Chennai.
- To evaluate the knowledge gained by the rural population about tobacco hazards from street play using a closed ended questionnaire.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

3.1. **Study Design and Subjects**

The study was a cross sectional and community based study. The target population for this study was the outpatients attending Tagore Medical and Dental Hospitals, Rathinamangalam, Chennai. The present study was conducted between 19th May 2015 to 26th May 2015, among the outpatients attending Tagore Medical and Dental Hospitals, Rathinamangalam, Chennai.

The college is situated in Vandalur about 30 Km from the Chennai city in a 50 acre campus which has a 700 bedded Tagore Medical College and Hospital. The college is linked to all parts of the city by road and rail. The Dental & Medical College is surrounded by 25 villages and caters to the rural public.

Outpatients aged 15 to 85 years who visited the Hospital and who participated the “No Tobacco Week Celebration” and who witnessed the street play were included in the study. Outpatients who were reluctant to participate, who have not watched the street play and who were chronically ill were excluded from the study. The co-operation in the first day was bit low, and there was a disinclination, anxiety, suspiciousness and reluctance, however subsequent day’s results were good. Informed oral consent was obtained from the participants before carrying out the survey.

3.2. **Preparation and Performance of Street Play**

Preparation of street play by the 20 dental interns (students) under the guidance of a public health dentist started 15 days
Illicit Use of Tobacco: A Street Play to Spread Anti-tobacco Awareness among the General Public Attending Tagore Dental and Medical College & Hospitals, Chennai

before the performance of street play. Every day the street play started after mobilising the out patients in the reception area and it included,

3.2.1. A Skit Demonstrating

- Reasons for smoking and its prevention
- Anti smoking act
- Hazards of passive smoking
- Tobacco as a cause of cancer
- Modes of quitting tobacco
- Placards illustration various hazards of tobacco

3.2.2. Individual Anti Tobacco Education to the Patients

3.2.3. Feedback Generation of the Skit Played Was Collected with Help of the Questionnaire in Local Language (See Annexure)

3.3. Activity Statistics

Table 1: Activity Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. of anti Tobacco Counselling Done</th>
<th>No. of Feedbacks from the Patients on Skit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19-05-2015</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20-05-2015</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21-05-2015</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22-05-2015</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>23-05-2015</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>25-05-2015</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>26-05-2015</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. Statistical Analysis

The data recorded were transferred and tabulated to the computer - Windows Microsoft Excel (2010) - for the purpose of the data analysis. SPSS version 21 was used for statistical analysis. Frequencies were observed for the questions which were collected as feedback to analyse the outcome of the programme.

RESULTS

The present study was done to assess the effectiveness of street play in creating awareness of tobacco hazards among rural population of Chennai. This study was done among a population of 178. The study population were obtained from villages around Tagore Medical and Dental colleges.
Graph 1: Feedback of the streetplay

Q1 - Are you a tobacco User?
Q2 - Do you know the hazards of tobacco?
Q3 - Are You aware that tobacco causes cancer?
Q4 - Are You aware about passive smoking and its ill effects?
Q5 - Was this street play useful in gaining knowledge about tobacco hazards?

The graph reveals that 35% of the participants were tobacco users and 65% have not used tobacco in any form. 87% of our study population is much aware about the hazards of tobacco, 92% about the risk of cancer in tobacco use.

It is conceptual that rural population is not aware of passive smoking or second hand smoke, but our study group accounted to 86% of awareness.

Feedback Received After Street Play: After any street play or role play it’s good to have feedback from community members in order to know how effective our play was in spreading the message among them. We were fortunate enough to get good response from community members post play. Overall the feedback of the streetplay excelled with a score of 96% gaining new knowledge about tobacco hazards, enlightening the thought process in this regard.

DISCUSSIONS

In this study, of the total population, 35% were tobacco users. This was similar to the study done by Naresh et al on prevalence of smoking and tobacco chewing among adolescents at rural areas of Jamnagar district Gujarat state with 33.12%[4].

A study focused on to evaluate the awareness of oral cancer, its risk factors and to estimate the prevalence of risk factors in a high-risk semi-urban population in India, shows that 86% had heard about oral cancer and 32% knew someone with oral cancer. Likewise in our study 92% were well aware about the risk of cancer in tobacco use. To conclude, the awareness of oral cancer in these high-risk populations was satisfactory, though certain gaps exist, pointing to a need for targeted health education and risk factor cessation counseling[5].

A data reveals that in Uttar Pradesh 50% men and 9.1 % women are affected by passive smoking in 2001[6].A comparative study was conducted in the year of 2001 to show the difference between knowledge of urban people and rural
people on passive smoking with equal samples selected from each community and the study was conducted and the committee concluded that rural people having poor knowledge regarding passive smoking comparing the urban people because of illiteracy, less health awareness and heavy works. They have shown that 30% of adults in urban having adequate knowledge and 12% in rural areas[7]. In contrast to the above study result, our rural population revealed an awareness of passive smoking or second hand smoke of 86%. This is very evident that there exists a marked increase in the awareness of passive smoking and its ill effects through a period of 15 years.

A study conducted by Dr Niyati Parmar et al to spread Message “save girl child” among Community Members of Rural Area of a District located in Western India through street play was quiet effective, followed by a great reduction in female infanticide thereafter[8]. In the same way our street play was a massive success (of about 96%) in culminating new knowledge about the ill effects of tobacco to our participants and in turn they vowed to spread the awareness, working towards Tobacco free India.

5.1. Other Interesting Outcomes of the Program:

- Strong support from the patients and public regarding the skit and its usefulness.
- Awareness on smokeless tobacco was spread.
- Additional information about tobacco hazards was conveyed to the public.
- A sense of social responsibility was created among the participants.
- Quit line and counselling help to the needy was provided with follow up till cessation.
- Students were very much motivated to work against Tobacco.

CONCLUSIONS

Street play should also be considered important as a teaching tool for students as well as general public to spread public awareness messages. Most important skills the students learned as mentioned by them were team work, community mobilization and communication skills. They also mentioned that it’s easy to give health education by simply giving lectures but educating people using performance method is a little difficult task as these methods need good vocabulary, capacity to work as a team, communication skill and interpersonal communication. However the results were far better from street play than any other means of health education.

REFERENCES

4. Naresh et.al study on prevalence of smoking and tobacco chewing among adolescents. JMSR journal of medical sciences research sep.2007.1 (1).

