

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGES
OF MALE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
TOWARDS TOBACCO USE
IN UiTM SHAH ALAM, MALAYSIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study was set out to investigate current perception, attitude and knowledge towards smoking among male youths studying in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Malaysia. Cross-sectional descriptive design and convenience survey methods were used. The sample consisted of 203 students between the ages of 19 to 27 years who completed the questionnaires. Perception, attitude and knowledge towards smoking were assessed with a modification of questions from Global Health Professions Students Survey (GHPSS) questionnaire. Overall, the perception of students from health based faculty and non-health based faculty towards smoking is more towards the negative aspects such as smoking leaves an unpleasant smell (86.7%), smoking gives one bad breath (86.7%) and smoking is bad for one's skin (70.0%). There are positive responses for their knowledge towards smoking associated disease and attitude regarding the idea of smoking banned and health professional impacts. Their awareness on the behavioral, pharmacologic and other related intervention need to be improved for example the effectiveness of each intervention in aiding smoking cessation. Although the study sample has geographic limitations, future national studies with similar populations of youth in Malaysia will help government and non-government agencies to understand youths' perceptions, attitude and knowledge as a turning point to promote smoke-free environment and producing better quality of life among Malaysian society. Intervention strategies from all members of community especially adolescent are needed to distribute their contribution of knowledge about the harmful effects of smoking.

Key words: youths; university; perception; attitude; knowledge; survey method

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Smoking is typically initiated between the ages of 10 to 20. (WHO, 2004). The prevalence of cigarette smoking based on the studies done in secondary school in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, showed that 33.2% of male smoking students are among 15 to 16 years of age. Family influence especially father's smoking habit is one of the most important factor that affect student's current smoking habits (Shamsuddin and Abdul Haris, 2000). Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, which is responsible for more than 400 000 deaths per year. Among high school students, cigarette use increased by 32% between 1991 and 1997 (Johnston *et al.*, 1996). Unless many of these teenagers quit soon after adolescence, the rise in youth smoking will be reflected in rising smoking rates among young adults (aged 18- 24 years). There were studies on youth-based tobacco control programs in Indonesia and researchers compared the finding of the prevalence of smoking, tobacco control program and exposure to secondhand smoke to other Southeast Asian countries.