

Smoking and COVID – 19 Health Risk

María Elena Contreras Palú^{1*}, Vivian Felipe² and Luis Mario Leyva González³

¹Faculty of Health Technology, University of Medical Sciences of Havana, Cuba

²Faculty of Health Technology, Cerro Municipality, University of Medical Sciences of Havana, Cuba

³Master in Health Psychology, Faculty of Health Technology, Cerro Municipality, University of Medical Sciences of Havana, Cuba

*Corresponding author: María Elena Contreras Palú, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Health Technology, Cerro Municipality, University of Medical Sciences of Havana, Master in Health Promotion and Education, Cuba



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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Smoking is a disease that causes death to thousands of people in the world, being a legal consumption product with a high risk of death for those who contract the Coronavirus that causes the pandemic.

Objective: To identify the level of perception of mortality risk in health professionals who smoke, in the face of contagion of the virus that causes the disease COVID-19. Development: current smoking is a risk factor for a more critical evolution of patients diagnosed with COVID-19 infection.

Conclusion: It is necessary to adopt integrative actions between academia and public decision makers, from raising awareness of risk perception to restrictive that allow the reduction of smoking among professionals, students, workers, managers and the population; Exemplarity is required for a greater benefit to your health and the reduction of contagion of the SAR-COV-2 coronavirus; cause of COVID-19.

Keywords: Smoking; Risk; Vulnerability; Coronavirus; SAR-COV-2

Introduction

Today the world is experiencing a shock product of the SARS-COV-2 Coronavirus causing the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused the death of millions of people, which causes general panic, there are people who do not have perception of risks, being more vulnerable to contracting the virus for being tobacco consumers, without taking into account the effects that the virus can cause to their family, for being passive smokers. Various risk factors have been pointed out as being responsible for the worse evolution of the disease. These include: age, male sex, suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, chronic respiratory, cardiovascular and debilitating diseases of the immune system. Smoking has also been indicated as a risk factor [1]. Smoking tobacco is a known risk factor in many respiratory infections that increases the severity of these types of diseases. After reviewing various studies, a group

of public health experts convened by the WHO on April 29, 2020 found that smokers are more likely to develop severe symptoms in the event of COVID-19, compared to non-smokers [2]. COVID-19 is an infectious disease that primarily attacks the lungs. Smoking impairs lung function, making it harder for the body to fight this and other diseases. Tobacco use is also a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, some respiratory diseases, and diabetes, and people with these diseases are at increased risk of developing severe symptoms in the event of verso affected by COVID-19. The research data available to date seems to indicate that smokers are at increased risk of failure due to COVID-19 [2].

It is understood that in the face of the complex situation produced by the COVID 19 pandemic, the challenge faced by health

professionals at the University of Medical Sciences of Havana is significant, to expand their ability to promote actions of healthy behaviors and attitudes of prevention, which contribute to reducing the number of infections in the face of the current global health crisis, both due to COVID and smoking, which is an addiction that causes thousands of deaths. Delving into the damage that smoking represents for smokers, family members and their environment is necessary to achieve an integrative action from the cognitive bases, from the science of Medical Education in the training of Health Technology professionals and at work of all factors and social actors, with the purpose of developing individual responsibility. Taking into account the above arguments, we set ourselves the following objective: to identify the level of perception of mortality risk in health professionals who smoke in the face of the spread of the SAR COVID-2 virus that causes the disease COVID-19.

Developing

For at least twenty years, mortality associated with smoking has been considered a global epidemic that is growing and threatening public health in many countries around the world. Today, diseases related to tobacco use are the leading cause of preventable disease and mortality worldwide. Tax revenues do not offset the health costs of smoking; becoming one of the greatest challenges for public health: the reduction of diseases and the reduction of the economic costs caused by tobacco consumption [3]. That is why smokers may be more susceptible to developing the disease. In the same way, ACE-2 can protect the virus from immune surveillance mechanisms, favoring infection. But the virus itself also alters the expression of ACE-2, producing a drastic reduction of this enzyme and the expression of other forms of ACE, as well as causing severe acute respiratory failure. In addition, gestural patterns in smokers, such as inhalations and repeated movement of the hands influence greater viral contamination and the probability of developing COVID-19 [4]. The health behaviors of health professionals (HP) are important examples, negatively or positively, of the healthy lifestyles of the population. Hence, all PS in general should emphasize the importance that their exemplary or model role deserves as promoter of health and healthy habits, involving themselves in adopting and admitting the behavior and commitment of a non-smoker [5]. In a survey carried out at the Faculty of Health Technology of the University of Havana to students of the Higher Technician in Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation, we were able to verify that a high percentage of students who smoke; internal and external factors of the environment, which can influence inadequate lifestyles; little perception of risk by students regarding tobacco consumption and its consequences for health; scarce health promotion and preventive work based on the risk of tobacco consumption.

In the face of COVID -19, multiple actions have been carried out in many countries around the world, based on the confinement of the population in their homes. Cuba is not exempt from these actions and they have played a fundamental role in this task: scientists, professionals from different branches and especially those of health. There are various activities and orientations that have been carried out to strengthen health in an integral way and in especially the psychological; Researchers have assessed the increase in addictions and among them smoking stands out, which means that contagion favors exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke in non-smokers in a family environment of smokers, being able to behave as a transporter of viral particles, increasing the risk of both diseases. Social and economic tensions cause dissimilar psychological reactions that are produced due to the pandemic and all the obstacles associated with it, not all people have access to detoxification, new measures must be exploited to control tobacco addiction, from awareness to the application of restrictive norms that contribute to the discouragement of the habit, as well as several ways of group and individual consultations, from the use of electronic means and mass communication that contribute to the acquisition of knowledge and awareness, to stop smoking and stimulate actions of a healthier lifestyle, which allows you to occupy your free time from social isolation in union with the family, minimize tensions while complying with security measures against the virus. For all these reasons, tobacco control measures are necessary in times of COVID-19, based on awareness campaigns from public administrations, whose purposes are:

- ☒ The protection of passive smokers in family environments,
- ☒ The increase in motivation to quit tobacco in smokers, showing the greatest risk of developing COVID-19 not only in them, but also in those with whom they live [6]. Cuban legal regulations, to a certain extent, have contributed to the prevention of smoking, although progress has not occurred with the speed required despite having the structure, organization and political will necessary for it, especially when comparing the results obtained with other countries in the region.

It is a challenge for the country to dictate a higher-ranking regulation for tobacco control that comprehensively regulates all the aspects that would condition an effective prevention of smoking and that its scope covers society and has a level of demand or rigorous control [7]. Regarding compliance with regulations, we must point out that compliance with them is a challenge for health institutions, that despite being legislated and there is a ban on smoking, there is no strict compliance with them, in the daily work of health professionals, those who are smokers in most cases, do not fully comply with the resolutions, standards and programs, constituting a weakness in the sector requiring an agglutinating

and interfactorial work that allows the reduction of addiction and more in these times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

The increased danger of mortality, of tobacco consumption in the face of the spread of COVID 19, makes it necessary to adopt timely and inclusive actions between the academy and public decision-makers that allow affordable knowledge from raising awareness of risk perception, to restrictive ones that facilitate, the reduction of smoking by professionals, students, workers, managers and the general population, which requires exemplary healthy behaviors, for the promotion and prevention of a healthy lifestyle and thus contribute to the reduction of smoking and the spread of the SAR COV-2 virus; cause of COVID-19.

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María Elena Contreras Palú. Biomed J Sci & Tech Res



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