

LETTER to the EDITOR

Is Waterpipe Smoking Becoming Increasingly Widespread Among the Youth?

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Dear Editor

In our study on waterpipe usage among young people was very interesting in terms of result which we have conducted recently in Turkey (Alvur et al., 2014), concerning waterpipe use in Turkey. The popularity of the narghile-waterpipe, also referred to as hookah, shisha or hubble-bubble has increased tremendously during the past few decades (Maziak et al., 2004; Al-Naggar and Saghir, 2010; Akl et al., 2011) and has spread beyond the bounds of Arab countries to other parts of the world, including Europe and America (Amin et al., 2010; Jarrett et al., 2012; Shihadeh et al., 2012).

It is estimated that a hundred million people throughout the world use a waterpipe everyday (Maziak et al., 2004; Amin et al., 2010; Poyrazoglu et al., 2010; Alzohairy, 2012; Ibrahimov et al., 2012). Waterpipe smoking has the same hazardous effects on health as cigarette smoking. It has an addictive character and causes many negative effects on health. Although it is needed to have more and more epidemiological studies, waterpipe smoking is known to have an association with severe problems such as malignancies, cardiovascular system diseases and nicotine addiction (Poyrazoglu et al., 2010).

There is a false belief in that waterpipe smoking is not as dangerous as cigarette smoking and it does not cause addiction, which is thought to increase the tendency towards waterpipe smoking among young people (Al-Naggar and Bobryshev, 2012; Alvur et al., 2014). In the study of Alvur et al. 22.990% of the students have stated that they would not be addicted to water pipe smoking while 0.72% did not have any idea on this subject (Alvur et al., 2014). Likewise, in the study of Hassoy et al. 52.3% of the students stated that waterpipe did not have such an addictive effect as cigarettes (Hassoy et al., 2011).

Salameh et al. (2014) found out that the rate of waterpipe smoking (among 3384 university students) was 23 %, and the rate of cigarette smoking was 19.2%. In the study among university students by Poyrazoglu et al. (2010), it was reported that 32.7% of 645 students smoked waterpipe. Amin et al. (2010) found out that the rate of waterpipe smoking for both gender (among 1,652 secondary school adolescents) was 21.7%. In Al-Naggar and Saghir, (2010)'s study, it has been reported that 30% of university students were waterpipe smokers.

A study on university students showed that a total of 26.9% of students smoked waterpipe. The rate of waterpipe smoking was seen to be 37.5% among male

students and 17.2% among female students in the same study (Korkmaz et al., 2013).

The young people seem to be smoking in order to increase their popularity among their friends. Recently, smoking waterpipe has also been accepted as a popular behaviour among young people. Adolescent people try waterpipe smoking without knowing that it is a product of tobacco; thus after some time they become addicted. The recent increase in waterpipe smoking constitutes a new battle area in the world for tobacco control organizations (Alvur et al., 2014). Waterpipe smoking has recently been described as a global tobacco epidemic by public health authorities (Hassoy et al., 2011; Alvur et al., 2014).

It can be concluded that the addictive character of waterpipe smoking should be pointed out; families and essentially young people should be made conscious of its hazardous effects.

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