

Assessment of Head and Neck Cancer Knowledge And Smoking Behaviors in High-Risk Population

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Objective: To assess the level of understanding of head and neck cancer in a population with a high smoking prevalence and determine associations that exist between level of knowledge and smoking cessation behaviors.

Methods: Indonesia served as our study site, due to having one of the highest male smoking rates (67%) in the world. A survey was administered to visitors at two university hospitals in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Results: All survey participants (n = 98) were Indonesian male smokers with ages ranging from 21-73 years. Education levels ranged from no education to doctorate degree, and calculated head and neck knowledge scores ranged from 0/41 to 30/41, with a mean score of 13/41 (31%). Education level, however, did *not* predict higher knowledge scores in this population. Only 38.8% of participants reported being aware of head and neck cancer and only 36.7% believed they were at risk of developing head and neck cancer despite smoking.

Participants who believed they were currently *not* at risk for developing head and neck cancer were 2.6 times more likely (OR: 2.62, 95% CI: 1.12 – 6.12, p<0.05) to consider quitting if diagnosed and treated with the disease. **Conclusion:** Even within a population of all high-risk individuals, there exist differences in health-seeking behaviors related to self-perceptions and understanding of head and neck cancer. Screenings may serve to benefit especially those who identify themselves as low risk despite engaging in risk factors, and lead to lower smoking rates following diagnosis of head and neck cancer.

Administer health education strategies, interventions and programs
Assessment of individual and community needs for health education
Chronic disease management and prevention
Public health or related education
Public health or related research
Social and behavioral sciences