

Prevalence of Risk-taking Behaviors

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Objective: The aim of this study is to determine the prevalence of self-reported risk-taking behaviors among male school students and their teachers in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia.

Design: This was a cross-sectional study conducted in Al Khobar area, Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

Setting: Intermediate and secondary schools for boys.

Method: The target population consisted of third grade intermediate and all three grades of secondary school male students. A multistage stratified sampling design was adopted. All students in the selected classes (1240) as well as all teachers (142) in the selected schools were included. Two sets of self-administered questionnaires were used: one for students and the other for teachers. The questionnaires contained characteristics data and data on smoking, practice of physical activity, and use of seat belt.

Result: A total of 162 (13.1%) male students were current cigarette smokers while 108 (8.7%) were shisha smokers. About 17% of teachers were current smokers. About half of students stated that their main motive for smoking was to know what smoking was like. A significantly higher proportion of students than their teachers practiced physical exercise (91% vs. 72.5% respectively). Less than 50% of students and teachers practiced regular physical exercise. Both male students and their teachers had lower seat belt use. Almost half of the students and more than half of the teachers did not use seat belts at all.

Conclusion: Strategies for disease prevention should be included as part of the school curriculum. Emphasis should be put on disease risk factors such as smoking, obesity, physical inactivity, and non-compliance with use of seat belt.