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## Teens' smoking influenced by parents' habits: Study

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### **New Delhi , Dec 5 : Hence proved! Children whose parents smoke are more likely to start smoking themselves.**

To understand the smoking habits of youth and their perception of smoking, the Department of Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences, under the aegis of Dr. Samir Parikh, conducted a survey among adolescents.

The team engaged and interacted with school going teenagers in order to assess the prevalent attitudes towards tobacco smoking.

1900 students were randomly chosen from six states, Delhi/NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai, to be a part of the study.

They were asked to fill in a structured survey which contained 13 questions. The results were tabulated using statistical measures and revealed patterns from which inferences were drawn.

These inferences are of value because they can be used as evidences to formulate policy frameworks and regulatory mechanisms to control smoking among the adolescents.

According to the WHO, smoking claims the lives of over seven million people each year. Six million of these people die as a result of direct tobacco use; while around 8,90,000 victims are non-smokers who have been repeatedly exposed to second-hand smoke.

In 2015, the WHO recorded that across the globe, 1.1 billion people smoked tobacco. In India, 34.6% of adults (out of which 47.9% is males and 20.3% is females) are smokers. The absolute number of male smokers has grown from 79 million in 1998 to 108 million in 2015.

#### Key Findings of the Study:

â€¢ 89% teenagers agreed that if it's ok for their parents to smoke, then it's ok for them too.

â€¢ 87% teenagers believe that watching actors smoke in movies promotes smoking among the audience.

â€¢ 85% teenagers agree that it is okay to experiment with smoking at least once.

â€¢ 78% teenagers admitted knowing if anyone smokes in their school.

• 78% teenagers agree that celebrity figures featuring in anti-smoking campaigns would be helpful.

• 75% teenagers feel that it is difficult to say "NO" to their friends or peers when they offer a cigarette.

• 63% teenagers believe that disclaimers showing harmful consequences of smoking do help in its prevention.

• 53% teenagers think that smoking can help in reducing stress.

• 52% teenagers believe smoking helps increase concentration levels.

• 46% teenagers believed that they would begin to smoke in efforts to appear 'cool' and mature among their peers.

• 19% teenagers believe that talking to a counselor can help in preventing possible addiction to smoking.

Inferences:

• **Media:** Through its various platforms, media can play an important role in promoting or dissuading young boys and girls from smoking. Young minds are extremely impressionable and the media can play a pivotal role in encouraging risky behavior by making smoking seem stylish. Therefore, the need for media literacy needs to be highlighted amongst the youth.

• **Peer Pressure:** Peer Pressure can cause youngsters to pick up the habit of smoking at a young age. This is because there is a need to impress others and stay at par with what comes across as the latest trends in being 'cool' and 'fitting in'. Peer pressure can cause youngsters to engage in risky behavior without thinking of the consequences. Teenagers need to be counselled about peer pressure and how they can handle it in a positive and pragmatic manner.

• **Parents:** Parents need to take on a supportive role. They need to develop a trusting rapport with the adolescent. They must not be patronizing in their approach. Penalizing the child often doesn't lead anywhere either. Instead engaging with the adolescent is important so that he or she can take on the responsibility of seeking professional help and counselling to overcome their addiction.

• **Professional Help:** Professional help is irreplaceable, and addictive behaviours do not change abruptly, but through a series of stages. Support and motivation are a very important part of a successful recovering addict, and once a person has developed a dependence on a substance, there almost always remains a danger of relapse. Counseling in such a scenario for the recovering addict as well as the family is very useful.

Dr Samir Parikh, Director, Department of Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences, Fortis Healthcare said, "Understanding that there is a problem which needs to be addressed is the first step towards overcoming tobacco addiction. Smoking is plaguing the society and we are moving into an era where it is acceptable for younger age groups to begin smoking and engage in other risky behavior."

He added, "This will only lead to the early onset of lifestyle related diseases and therefore we need to promote adequate training and empowerment of any caregiver who actively works with children to ensure that early identification and timely intervention take place. In order to wage a war against tobacco use, one must be fully equipped with adequate knowledge about how tobacco can affect the mind and body. The support system of anyone overcoming addiction must realize that the power of psychological dependence is extremely strong and can only be broken by taking small incremental steps over a

period of time."

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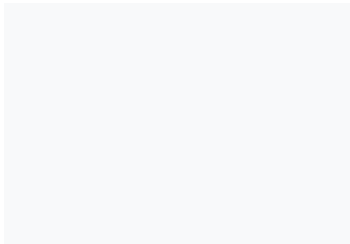


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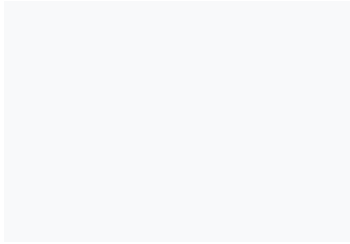
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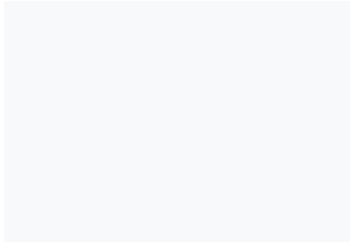
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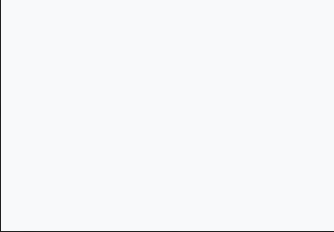


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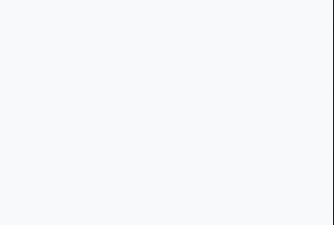


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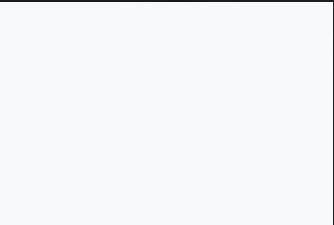
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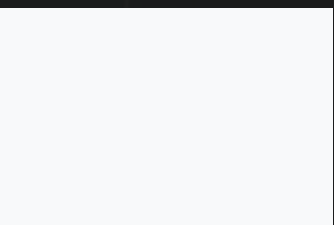


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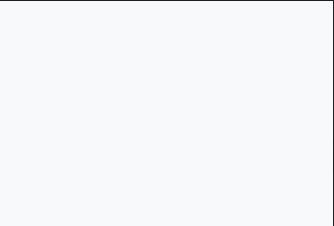


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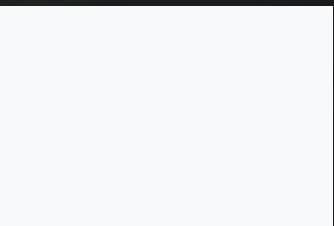
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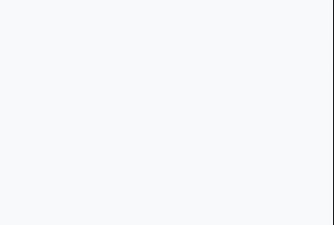


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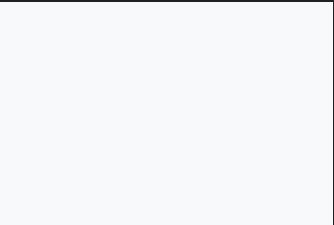
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