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PREVALENCE, PERCEPTION AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED TO TOBACCO EXPERIMENTATION AMONG SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS PREVALÊNCIA, PERCEPÇÃO E FATORES ASSOCIADOS À EXPERIMENTAÇÃO DE TABACO ENTRE ADOLESCENTES ESCOLARES PREVALENCIA, PERCEPCIÓN Y FACTORES ASOCIADOS A LA EXPERIENCIA DE TABACO ENTRE ADOLESCENTES ESCOLARES

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to verify the prevalence of tobacco experimentation, perception about smoking habits and factors associated with its experimentation. **Methods:** this cross-sectional study was carried out with adolescents enrolled in a state school network. There were 840 students answering to the standardized and validated questionnaire. Sociodemographic information, perception and harms of smoking were assessed. Descriptive analysis of the variables, absolute and relative frequencies, average and standard deviation were performed. The research project has been approved by the Ethics Committee in Research, CAAE 0183.0.454.000-11. **Results:** prevalence of tobacco experimentation was 22.3% ($p < 0.001$), most female with average age of 16.63 ± 1.45 and low education of father and mother (80.8% and 78.9%) **Conclusion:** prevalence of experimentation was observed similar to Brazilian capitals, high level of knowledge about tobacco and experimental association in older boys who work, tolerated smoke around and against the smoking ban in public places. **Descriptors:** School Children; Experimentation; Smoking.

RESUMO

Objetivo: verificar a prevalência de experimentação de tabaco, percepção acerca do hábito de fumar e fatores associados à experimentação. **Método:** estudo de corte transversal realizado com escolares adolescentes matriculados na rede estadual. Responderam ao questionário padronizado e validado 840 escolares. Avaliaram-se informações sociodemográficas, percepção e malefícios do tabagismo. Realizou-se análise descritiva das variáveis, frequências absolutas e relativas, média e desvio-padrão. O projeto de pesquisa foi aprovado pelo Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa, CAAE 0183.0.454.000-11. **Resultados:** prevalência de experimentação de tabaco foi de 22,3% ($p < 0,001$), maioria do sexo feminino com idade média de $16,63 \pm 1,45$ e baixa escolaridade de pai e mãe (80,8% e 78,9%). **Conclusão:** observou-se prevalência de experimentação similar a capitais brasileiras, alto nível de conhecimento sobre tabaco e associação da experimentação nos garotos mais velhos que trabalham, toleravam fumar perto e contrários à proibição de fumo em locais públicos. **Descritores:** Escolares; Experimentação; Tabagismo.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: verificar la prevalencia de experiencia de tabaco, percepción acerca del hábito de fumar y factores asociados a la experiencia. **Método:** estudio de corte transversal realizado con escolares adolescentes matriculados en la red estatal. Respondieron al cuestionario estandarizado y validado 840 escolares. Se evaluaron informaciones sociodemográficas, percepción y maleficios del taquismo. Se realizó análisis descriptiva de las variables, frecuencias absolutas y relativas, media y desvio-modelo. El proyecto de investigación fue aprobado por el Comité de Ética en Investigación, CAAE 0183.0.454.000-11. **Resultados:** prevalencia de experiencia de tabaco fue de 22,3% ($p < 0,001$), mayoría del sexo femenino con edad media de $16,63 \pm 1,45$ y baja escolaridad del padre y la madre (80,8% y 78,9%). **Conclusión:** se observó prevalencia de experiencia similar a capitales brasileñas, alto nivel de conocimiento sobre tabaco y asociación de la experiencia en los niños más viejos que trabajan, toleraban fumar cerca y contrarios a la prohibición de fumar en locales públicos. **Descritores:** Escolares; Experiencia; Tabaquismo.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the chronological period where changes happen to physical and mental order. At this stage of human development, individual characteristics such as personality and identity are shaping up, but, often, such evolution is not accompanied by maturity or discernment, this factor that linked to gain autonomy, makes the young vulnerable to marketing of alcohol and tobacco.¹ Behaviors considered healthy, when acquired in adolescence, represent good prediction for him in adult life, in the same way that risk attitudes bring strong tendency to acquire chronic diseases.²

Adolescents constitute a high-risk group for the consolidation of the smoking habit, as they are exposed more precocious. Added to this, there is the fact that, in most cases, tobacco is the first drug consumed in adolescence.^{3,4} The phase of experimentation is understood by a collection of factors that can lead the young to early tobacco consumption. Among these factors are the curiosity, the need to be accepted into a particular social group, the ease with which the young have access to cigarettes, and, also the pursuit of comfort to cherish intimate problems.⁵

The determinants for adherence to smoking are multifactorial and present interrelation, as the influence of the parents and close relatives, belonging to male group, have school disapproval, have low self-esteem and belong to broken families.^{2,6} However, adherence to smoking in adolescence does not result only from proximal factors and individual scope, but also of distal factors that relate to the context in which each individual is inserted, with emphasis on the influence of social groups and the media.³

The risk of an adolescent becoming a chronic smoker^{3,7,8} is greater among those who as early adopt the habit of smoking, developing damage to health from dependence to nicotine until the consequences of long-term smoke exposure. It is worth noting that if the current trend of tobacco consumption persists, in the future, this habit can be responsible for the deaths of up to 250 million of today's children and adolescents who adhere to smoking, with diseases related to smoking, such as cancer, emphysema and myocardial infarction.⁸

Given the above, the present study seeks to:

- Check the prevalence of tobacco experimentation.

- Assess the perceptions of adolescents about smoking.

- Identify the factors associated with experimentation with tobacco.

METHOD

Cross-sectional epidemiological study conducted with school children enrolled in public schools of the State area in the city of Jequié-BA, aged 14 to 19 years old. This research covered all 12 schools in the urban area, with a total population of 4,073 school children between the ages used in this research. Smoking prevalence data obtained in a study conducted in the city of Feira de Santana⁴ was carried out with the following parameters: 95% confidence level and prevalence of smoking of 10%. The number obtained was fixed to the population of school children aged 14 to 19 years old, enrolled in public schools in the municipality. The value obtained was of school to which 714 were increased by 30% to prevent the possible loss of sample elements. With this the sample was of 928 adolescents.

To perform the study, permission was requested to the 13th Regional Board of Education of the State of Bahia, with headquarters in Jequié-BA. Then the nominal relationship existing of public schools in the city was obtained, their addresses, names of Directors, contact phones and still the nominal date of birth relationship of school children enrolled in each of the schools and grades frequented. The relationship of school aged 14 to 19 years old, it was possible to perform the calculation of the sample. Then, it was identified the sampling interval ($n = 4$) and were drawn school children who would be interviewed, being adopted the simple random sample, not being allowed the replacement of sampling elements not identified in 3 scheduled visits schools.

To obtain the data the questionnaire was standardized and validated, using in the research of smoking in school children⁹ (Vigescola), proposed by WHO, for this have been used in studies of this nature carried out in Brazil.

In this work, part of this instrument was used, since demographic issues were selected and those regarding adolescents' perception about the habit of smoking, tobacco consumption and experimentation and questions that measured the level of knowledge of young people about tobacco consumption, the strategies adopted by schools for the prevention of consumption and experimentation, as well as public bodies.

The data were obtained in the period from April to September 2012. Prior to data collection some workshops took place with the field team for the standardization of the examiners. After that, contact with the direction was established of the schools to schedule the date and schedule for the implementation of the research instrument and proceed to delivery of an informed consent to adolescents so they take it to their parents. The data were obtained at school and in the shift that selected adolescent was enrolled, after the return of the ICF signed by parents or school guardian.

On the day established the research team was headed to school and showed the direction the school relationship drawn to participate in the study, according to the shift and number. It was requested that adolescents leave the classroom and go to the place determined by the Board for the collection of data.

After finishing data collection, the questionnaires were tabulated with the help of Epidata software, v. 3,4¹⁰, performing double typing with posterior correction of discrepancies identified. For the statistical analysis a descriptive analysis of variables was performed, calculating the absolute and relative frequencies, as well as the measures of central tendency, association between tobacco experimentation (the dependent

variable) and sociodemographic, economic data and the perception and knowledge of the adolescent about smoking (independent variables). The variables were tested by using the Chi square test with a significance level of 5% ($p < 0.05$). The data were analyzed in The Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows.¹¹

The research project has been approved by the Ethics Committee in Research of the State University of Southeast Bahia (CEP/UESB), protocol number 212/2011, CAAE 0183.0.454.000.¹¹

RESULTS

Of 928 school adolescents enrolled in State schools in the city of Jequié, Bahia drawn to compose the sample of the study, 840 responded the questionnaire, of which 60% were female. The average age of the students was 16.63 ± 1.45 years old. Among those interviewed 39.8%, 33.8% and 26.4% were registered respectively in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade of high school.

The prevalence of tobacco experimentation was 22.3%, being of 28.9% in men and 17.9% in women. ($X^2 13.737$ and P value < 0.0001).

The main socio-demographic findings are presented in table 1 and shows that most adolescents do not practice remunerated work (69.6%) and lived with their parents (78.1%).

Table 1. Values of social, economic, demographic and educational backgrounds variables. Jequié-BA, 2013.

Variable	n	%
Years old (n=823)		
14 - 16	396	47,83
17 - 19	397	47,94
Gnder (n=827)		
Female	496	60,0
Remunerated Work (n=819)		
No	570	69,6
Religiion (n=836)		
With religion	707	84,6
Live with (n=834)		
Parents	652	78,1
Economic Class (n=838)		
Most favors	670	79,9
Father´s education		
Low	659	80,8
Mother´s education		
Low	658	78,8

Table 2 reveals both the opinion of school children about the knowledge of the harms arising from contact with tobacco smoke. In

the table are arranged the results of higher rate of responses.

Table 2. Perception and knowledge of school children about harms arising from tobacco smoke. Jequié-BA, 2013.

Variable	n	%
Is bad for your health breathe cigarette smoke (n=828)		
True	733	88,5
Nicotine causes addiction (n=833)		
True	785	94,2
Must ask permission to smoke around (n=833)		
Yes	780	93,6
Allow to smoke around (n=831)		
No	708	85,2
Smoke of others hurts (n=834)		
Yes	812	97,3
Did you smoke at home? (n=816)		
No	656	80,4
Did you smkke outside your house? (n=830)		
No	478	57,6
Prohibit smoking in public places? (n=830)		
Yes	775	97,4
Did you see anti-tobacco messages? (n=830)		
Few	507	61,1
Did you see anti-tobacco messages in envets? (n=829)		
Yes	598	72,1
Tobacco in the midia? (n=829)		
Yes	798	96,3

As regards the opinion of school adolescents about some of the harm of the cigarette consumption interspersed with the dependent

variable (experimentation with tobacco), it was observed the results contained in tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Analysis of the experimentation according to adolescents socio-demographics data. Jequié-BA, 2013.

Variable	Experimentation of tobacco				X ²	p
	Yes		No			
	n	%	n	%		
Age						
14 - 16	73	9,2	323	40,7	7,750	0,005
17 - 19	106	13,3	291	36,7		
Gender						
Male	95	11,6	234	28,7	12,737	<0,001
Female	87	10,7	400	49,0		
Remunerated work						
Yes	70	8,7	175	21,7	8,324	0,004
No	109	13,5	453	56,1		
Live with						
Parents	135	16,4	509	61,6	3,590	0,062
Other	40	6,0	129	15,7		
Religion						
Yes	147	17,8	549	66,5	3,590	0,058
No	37	4,5	92	11,1		
Economic Class						
Most favors	144	17,4	518	62,7	0,528	0,467
Less favors	40	4,8	124	15,0		
Father´s education						
High	27	3,4	113	14,4	0,758	0,383
Low	147	18,6	502	63,6		
Mother´s Education						
High	35	4,25	141	17,1	0,787	0,370
Low	149	18,1	498	60,6		

Table 4 demonstrates the relationship between perception and opinion about tobacco faced with experimentation with tobacco. The analysis made it possible to observe that adolescents who felt necessary that smokers were asked permission to

consume tobacco next to third parties have experienced more (20.3%) as those that do not allow smoking around experienced more tobacco than those that allow (15.7% versus 6.7%.

Table 4. Analysis of experimentation according to perception and opinion of the adolescents about tobacco consumption. Jequié-BA, 2013.

Variable	Experimentation of tobacco				X ²	p
	Yes		No			
	n	%	n	%		
Does it hurt health breathe cigarette smoke?						
True	162	19,8	564	68,9	0,003	0,953
False	21	2,6	72	8,8		
Does nicotine causes dependency?						
True	176	21,4	600	72,8	0,942	0,331
False	8	1,0	40	4,9		
Someone else's smoke is bad?						
Yes	177	21,4	626	75,8	2,524	0,112
No	8	1,0	14	1,7		
Must ask permission to smoke around?						
Yes	167	20,3	605	73,4	4,717	0,030
No	18	2,2	34	4,1		
Allows smoke around?						
Yes	55	6,7	67	8,2	42,481	< 0,001
No	129	15,7	571	69,5		
Did you smoke in your home?						
Yes	57	7,1	101	12,5	21,975	<0,001
No	122	15,1	527	65,3		
Did you smoke outside your home?						
Yes	101	12,3	247	30,0	10,424	0,001
No	84	10,2	390	47,4		
Prohibit smoking in public places?						
Yes	163	19,83	604	73,5	6,772	0,009
No	20	2,4	35	4,3		
Tobacco in the midia?						
Yes	179	21,8	611	74,4	2,913	0,087
No	3	0,3	28	3,4		

DISCUSSION

The natural vulnerability of adolescents related to factors of youth, as a feeling of omnipotence and curiosity of new experiences, when encountered with personal factors as conflicts, psychosocial aspects of family order (structure and support), often lead this young man to escape from reality, found often in the cigarette.⁴

A study in Pelotas-RS¹² involving adolescents, shows the relationship between experimentation and continued use was equivalent between genders, indicating that for every 2.6 young people who try cigarettes, one remains in use for life.

When observed from a prospective mode, the current young experimenters could be adults with harms to health.² Several investigations, in different environments, have shown that cigarette consumption represents a large portion of the drugs most consumed among adolescents and the sooner it is registered the first contact, the greater the chance of this adolescent become

addicted to nicotine and consequently, the greater the dependency.¹³

"Experimentation" is defined as: verification by experience; to submit the experience; to rehearse.¹⁴ The decision-making that leads the young to take the first cigarette is multifactorial and cannot be described succinctly. It is a fact that not every adolescent who try tobacco become a heavy smoker, however, the first cigarette is essential requirement to make this happen.^{3,9}

Smoking among adolescents, around the world, still constitutes a serious public health problem. In Brazil the Children and Adolescent Statute¹⁵ and the law 10,702 (July 14, 2003)¹⁶ prohibit the marketing and/or distribution, under 18 years old, of products which may cause addiction, among these derivatives, it is the cigarette. Despite the legal regulations, most young people in this study (62.5%) experienced cigarettes before 18 years old, corroborating with other research.¹³

The prevalence of tobacco experimentation in this study was 22.3%, similar value to

findings obtained in the cities of Vitória-ES (26.4%), Natal-RN (26.0%), João Pessoa-PB (22.3%)¹⁷; Feira de Santana-BA (23.3%)⁴; Santo André-SP (24.0%)¹⁸ Different results were observed in cities like Gravataí-RS (16.9%)¹; Belo Horizonte-MG (11.7%)³; Campo Grande (49%)¹⁹; Salvador-BA (16.1%)²⁰; Belém-PA (44.7%)²¹ and Pelotas-RS (43%)¹⁴.

In Jequié-BA it was found that a higher percentage of school adolescents were predominantly female, a fact that observed in other studies with school adolescents.^{1-4,7,22} This fact can be translated by the largest portion of the Brazilian population belong to the female. With regard to socio-demographic variables, the findings from this study corroborate with those of others who also identified that is greater than the risk of an adolescents from the age group of 17 to 19 years old^{3,4,20,22,20}, male gender^{3,4,30}, without remunerated work⁸, who has religion⁴ and belonging to most favored economic class²⁰ experiment tobacco. Although it was found that adolescents who live with their parents experience more, in the literature consulted was not identified, study which obtained similar results.

This study did not identify significant statistical differences between the tobacco experimentation by adolescents and the education level of the parents. However, it showed higher prevalence of experimentation in those school children whose parents had low education. Studies on smoking among adolescents and young adults in the city of Belo Horizonte³, and in school young Brazilian and Spanish²³, the habit of smoking during adolescence is still an issue prevalent in society. Adding to this, there is the constant lack of information, translated by less education of parents³, as noted in the findings of this investigation. In research conducted in the city of Cuiabá-MT²⁴, it some studies have shown that the highest maternal educational level is a predictor of better family health. For it, children whose mothers have studied up to the fundamental level are more likely to become smokers before those who have completed high school.

To evaluate the perception of the school about the harms of tobacco, it was found that these had high level of knowledge about the harmful effects of this habit, given that most correctly answered the questions that address the harms of cigarette consumption. However, it was found that a relatively high percentage tried smoking.

By analyzing the perception of the harm of tobacco among school children of Jequié who

experienced or not this drug, it was found that there was no statistical significant difference. Due to the fact of this study have been conducted on school environment, it is assumed that the respondents possessed more access to information and probably better living conditions than the system dropouts. When comparing the perceptions of about the harms of tobacco with their educational level, it was found that the prevalence of smoking among adolescents who frequented the school was nearly five times greater than students.²⁵

Regarding the coexistence with smoke of cigarettes, school children that do not allow people to smoke around and who felt necessary that smokers were asked permission for the consumption of cigarettes, experience more tobacco.¹ In this study it was found that school children who have not had contact with cigarette smoke in house and external environment and that are in favour of banning smoking in public places showed lower prevalence of tobacco experimentation, corroborating with study conducted in the city of Pelotas-RS.²⁵

The influence of the familiar customs and habits of young people is the most variable observed in studies about tobacco use and adolescents, being familiar habits and people who surround them, major predictors of decision making tobacco experience, given that family influences on fixing of customs, educates, promoting, maintaining or eliminating harmful habits to health as in smoking.²⁶

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of tobacco experimentation among school children in the state schools of the city of Jequié was 22.3%. They were assessed as high adolescents' perception about the harm from smoking habit, since most of them showed, in the questionnaire, basic knowledge about addiction and toxicity of the smoke from the cigarettes.

For this population, it was possible to identify as risk factors for experimentation with tobacco: being male, being between 17 and 19 years old, have remunerated profession, disagree with the need to ask permission and accept to smoke around, having contact with cigarette smoke inside and outside the home and having an opinion that disagrees with the possibility of banning smoking in public places.

This information raises the need to best approach in schools about the anti-tobacco public policies, returning them to the interruption of the adolescent decision making

in experiment the tobacco. It is also highlighted the need to raise the awareness of families and people close to smoking schools, the need to interrupt the sooner this habit. It is must be also consider the importance of studies that evaluate other variables in order to elaborate a more complete profile of school adolescent that will tend to experiment tobacco.

We identified as limitations the study being the cross-section type, allowing only the momentary situation analysis, as well as having interviewed only adolescents who attended the school. In this context, there is a need for more comprehensive studies and longitudinal type involving adolescents in the community, too.

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