



Modern Thai Female Generation Must Stay Away From Tobacco Consumption

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Every year abstention from tobacco consumption day is on 31st of May. This year the World Health Organization's campaign slogan is "Gender and tobacco marketing, with an emphasis on women?"

At present, the situation of women smoking all over the world and in Thailand tends to be worsening, while tobacco companies are targeting women for their marketing. Their aim is to encourage women to consume more tobacco, to compensate for less cigarette smoking among men due to campaigning to stop tobacco consumption.

The information on tobacco consumption from 151 countries all over the world shows that on average, 7% of female teenagers consume tobacco, while in some countries, teenage girls consume nearly as much tobacco as teenage boys, that is 12%. This means, the percentage of girls consuming tobacco has increased.

In Thailand, according to the 2009 survey results of the Action on Smoking and Health Foundation, out of the whole Thai population of 63 millions, there were 12.5 million tobacco consumers. There were 80,000 Thai women tobacco consumers, or 3.1% of the overall population. This means 3 out of 100 Thai women smoked. There were as many as 11.7 million Thai male tobacco consumers, or 45.6%, which decreased from 70% in the previous year.

When comparing the ratio of Thai female tobacco consumers with that of Thai male smokers, it has been concluded that continual campaigning for non-consumption of tobacco has paid off as evident in less tobacco consumption among men. But, in the case of female consumers, although the number of women smokers remained small, the number of new female consumers has been on the increase, indicating perhaps that in future more and more women will consume tobacco.

The main factors responsible for more tobacco consumers among female teenagers are, imitating female friends consuming tobacco, having a go at smoking, following their example, female friends' persuasion for their companionship in tobacco consumption.

Besides, families can have influence as well, as shown in a survey result that, if teenage girls' elder sisters smoke, chances of them taking up smoking will be nine-fold. Likewise, if their mothers smoke, there will be six-fold chance of these girls ending up consuming tobacco while there will be one and a half chance if their fathers smoke.

Based on the above-mentioned family factors, at present the social environment of Thai teenage girls causes most concern, as teenage girls start tobacco consumption for the sake of imitating their female friends, and family members by observation and direct contact with cigarette fumes. Non-smoker teenage girls are likely to become passive smokers, inhaling fumes harmful to their health.

Women-smokers are more likely to have serious illnesses. They are more likely to develop lung cancer than men, due to their hormonal differences. They are prone to, ovarian cancer, cardio-vascular ischaemia, cardiac attack, cerebral-vascular accident, premature aging, skin change with more facial wrinkles, darken lips, oral problems, and three times more likely to be childless than non-smokers.

Importantly, female tobacco addicts find it harder to give up cigarette smoking than men, because women become edgy trying to abstain from tobacco consumption and, they worry about putting on weigh. What is most shocking is that 50% of women, who cannot give up smoking, die in middle age.

In keeping with the mortality rate of women due to tobacco consumption, in 1994 there were 5,793 deaths. 2,489 women died of lung cancer, 1,361 women died of pulmonary failure, 762 of cardiac and vascular diseases, 396 deaths caused by different types of malignant tumours, and 785 cases died of other diseases related to tobacco consumption.

Having seen the mortality statistics of women due to tobacco consumption, many Thai organizations join force to campaign for women to stop smoking. For example, there are, creating awareness of dangers from tobacco consumption, strict control of cigarette advertisements, and making teenage girls understand various ploys used by tobacco companies, etc. They are means for protection of Thai women, and apart from reducing the number of female patients and woman mortality, they also prevent premature death.

However, we should all cooperate to reduce the number of tobacco consumers, no matter whether they are men or women, to gradually eliminate the value of tobacco consumption from Thai society and the world. We must start with ourselves before reaching out to communities, societies and finally the whole nation of Thailand.

If we can achieve this our future young generation will not know the term ?chain-smoking?, which without doubt is the most dangerous killer.

Source: Komsan Chaiongkarn Team content www.thaihealth.or.th ^[1]

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