

9. INTERVENTIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF SMOKING AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS



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Introduction. Smoking is one of the most accepted habits among children and adolescents. Young people who use e-cigarettes or 'vaping' and other alternative forms of smoking have a wrong view of the risks they present.

Aim of study. Prevention of smoking among children and adolescents and the involvement of family doctors in this process.

Methods and materials. We conducted a descriptive incidence study, which included a group of 53 family doctors from Hâncești and Strășeni districts. The research protocol was based on the method of questioning family doctors during the organized workshops. The study took place during the month of December 2023 according to the collaboration project between the Pediatric Society of the Republic of Moldova and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Results. The rate of e-cigarette use increases significantly as late adolescence is progressing. After the age of 14, the rate of e-cigarette use exceeds to 50%. The age at which children try other alternatives for smoking is another alarming aspect. According to the data, 2.38% and 3.17% of children mention the beginning of electronic smoking at the age of 8 and 9, respectively. By the age of 10, 7.94% of children have tried it and after the age of 11, more than 10%. Children most frequently tried electronic smoking at the age of 13 (26.19%). After the age of 14, the rate of initiation of alternative smoking among children decreases. The general data from the pretest reveal the knowledge of the medical public in relation to the variety of commercial products in the tobacco industry, thus 17% are informed about Snus, 28.3% know about Heated Products, 26.4% - about Patches. The potential problems of nicotine use known to the public are intoxication (92.5%) and dependence (98.1%), less withdrawal (39.6%) and abstinence (37.7%). Among the highly recommended clinical intervention methods, group counseling remains the most popular, personalized, individualized (62.3%). After the workshop, a substantial change in answers was noticed. From the total number of family doctors, 81.3% became familiar with Snus, 83.3% with Heated products, 72.9% with Patches. The potential problems of nicotine use known to the public became intoxication (97.9%), dependence (95.8%), resistance (68.8%), abstinence (56.3%), withdrawal (87.5%). Among the highly recommended clinical intervention methods, group counseling remains the most popular, personalized, individualized (91.7%).

Conclusion. Smoking is one of the most important problems among children and adolescents both in the Republic of Moldova and throughout the world. An important step is training and involving as many family doctors as possible in the process of detecting active and passive smokers.