

Abstract

Background: Non-smoking staff and a non-smoking environment are prerequisites for high-quality health care. Despite this, the prevalence of smoking among healthcare workers is still high. Healthcare workers represent a specific group that should be informed about the harm of smoking. The aspect that strengthens the motivation to smoke among healthcare workers seems to be the demanding nature of work in hospital, which is associated with a higher level of stress. Part of the ethical issue of smoking is delegating one's work duties to other people and disrupting collegiality and relationships in the team in general.

Aims: The aim is to determine the proportion of smokers and non-smokers in a selected sample of non-medical healthcare workers. To further identify what role a cigarette plays in the smokers' working day and how the consequences of smoking during working time are subjectively perceived. To determine the level of motivation to quit smoking and awareness of a smoking cessation program offered by the employer. To determine whether smoking affects interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

Material and methods: Quantitative data collection in the form of an online questionnaire via the Google Forms platform was chosen for the implementation of the research. The basic set of research consisted of non-medical health workers of the Military University Hospital Prague. A non-probability method of selection, criterion selection, was used to create a set of respondents. The research took place in the period from 1/11/2022 to 31/12/2022, data was collected continuously for two months. The collected data were transcribed into the MS Excel and subjected to a simple statistical analysis.

Results: Most respondents were women, university educated, the majority were aged 36-50 years, 23% of the sample were smokers, of whom 55% smoke regularly and 53% smoke 10 or fewer cigarettes a day. The obtained data showed that smoking is used as a means of relaxation, most respondents said that it also has a calming effect on them. Three-quarters of smokers said that they consider smoking to be a habit. The level of motivation to quit smoking and awareness of the program to support smoking cessation was also found, interest in its use is relatively low. The results also show that smoking affects interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Half of the non-smoking respondents stated that they were bothered by co-workers smoking, a third of them had experienced a conflict situation in the workplace related to smoking, and less than half of the smokers had experienced a negative response to their smoking habit.

Conclusions: Based on the obtained data, it emerged that smoking is used as a means of relaxation. The level of motivation to quit smoking and awareness of the program to support smoking cessation was also determined. Practical recommendations suitable for maintaining and strengthening the non-smoking policy of the health care facility were derived. Facilitating the process of quitting smoking through greater awareness of available options such as professional support and financial benefit. Furthermore, it is possible to offer employees an alternative for making good use of breaks and other calming strategies instead of smoking. Health care workers can be an example in promoting non-smoking and helping smokers to quit, thus contributing to reducing the society-wide effects of smoking.

Keywords: smoking; tobacco dependence; smoking cessation; healthcare workers; Smoke-free Hospital; Health Promoting Hospital