

**FACTORS RELATED TO SMOKING BEHAVIOR
AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN CANTHO CITY, VIETNAM**

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ABSTRACT

This is a cross - sectional study that determined student's smoking status and assessed the association between factors contributing to smoking behavior among the respondents. The total number of subjects in the study was 363 male high school students from Cantho City, Vietnam, aged 16 – 23 years old. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The study of 363 students had two groups for comparison urban and rural students and attempted to describe the different smoking behavior of students in these groups.

It was found that the prevalence of smoking among students was 21.8% (urban school=19.8%, rural school=23.8%) with the median age to start smoking at 16 years. Half of the students started smoking for curiosity. More than half of students had close friends who were smokers and the major of them received cigarettes from friends. In addition, most students 92.5% reported that their teachers smoked. The study also showed that there were many significant associations between smoking behavior of students and its contributing factors, such as perception towards smoking ($p<.0001$); smoking behavior and family relationship (χ^2 (urban school)= 10.605, $p= .001$; χ^2 (rural school)= 4.126, $p= .042$), smoking friends (χ^2 (urban school)= 15.710, $p< .0001$; χ^2 (rural school)= 8.108, $p= .004$).

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the strengthening of health education programs in order to improve youths' perception and lifestyle during school age is of great importance. Health promotion should also include establishing a tobacco free environment in the school as well as peer group for anti-smoking programs. Parents, teachers and school management teams should be organized systematically to prevent smoking among students.

**KEY WORDS :FACTOR/ SMOKING BEHAVIOR /HIGH SCHOOL/STUDENTS/
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