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Prevalence and patterns of tobacco use among woman in Benin city, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Tobacco use is one of the single biggest causes of preventable deaths and is increasingly affecting developing countries and men and women alike. Tobacco use is historically more common in men but is becoming more common among women. In the absence of population-based health information in many dev eloping countries and sub-Saharan Africa in particular, public health planning and priority setting is in disarray. *M*ost of the prevalence studies on tobacco have concentrated on smoked tobacco and men in particular. This cross-sectional study design looked at the prevalence, patterns and determinants of tobacco use among women in Benin City, an urban area in Nigeria.

Methods: 491 face-to-face interviews were conducted in 45 enumeration areas randomly sampled in Oredo LGA in Benin City, Nigeria. Twelve households were randomly sampled in each EA and eligible woman over the age of 18 years was identified in each household.

Results: The prevalence of tobacco use was 8.8% comprising of smoking (3.3%) and smokeless (5.5%) initiation occur during the teenage years mostly. Smoking cigarettes was more common among the younger, more educated women and *Tabba* (a mixture of powdered dry tobacco leaf and sodium bicarbonate) used mostly by older less educated women (RR = 3.10, CI = 1.01 - 9.48). The participants perceived friends using tobacco as a reason for their starting to use tobacco. Determinants of tobacco use were education, exposure to tobacco advertising and / or promotions which occurs almost unrestricted despite some tobacco control legislations.

Conclusions: The findings suggest that tobacco use is going on unhindered and unless something is done to curtail the activities of the tobacco industry, a major public health catastrophe is looming.