

TOBACCO USE AMONG YOUTH IN TAIWAN – A HIGH PREVALENCE OF ADULT SMOKING AREA

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Abstract

- Cigarette smoking significantly increases mortality among Taiwanese aged 35 years and above. Around 46.0% of men and 6.1% of women in Taiwan are smokers. Most smokers begin using tobacco in their teens and recent reports indicate that smoking prevalence is climbing among youth. Therefore, based on the principles and design of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, we conducted a study which was school-based and employed a two-stage sampling design to produce city/county representative data to determine the prevalence of tobacco use among students aged 13-15 years in Taiwan. A total of 22,339 students from 211 schools participated in the study and the response rate was 96.82%.
- Our results show that the current cigarette smoking rate is 6.5% among this age group in Taiwan. Two-thirds of current young smokers were exposed to smoking at home and 90.4% of current smokers were exposed to smoking in public areas. Strikingly, 60.7% of the students who had never smoked were also exposed to environmental tobacco smoking. More than 30% of young smokers smoked at home without their parents' acknowledgement or objection to smoking which indicate a key direction of working with parents regarding prevention of youth smoking. It also shows that cigarettes are widely available and easily accessible in Taiwan. Forty percent of young current smokers can effortlessly purchase cigarettes, and approximately 65% of young smokers were not refused the buying of cigarettes in their age group. The authorities concerned should strive to stop illegal selling thus reducing accessibility of cigarettes among youth.

Background

- Tobacco use is one of the major preventable causes of death in the world.
- In Taiwan, Smoking cigarettes significantly increases mortality among individuals 35 years and older, and lung cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death.
- About 46% of men and 4% of women in Taiwan are current cigarette smokers.
- Most people begin using tobacco in their teens, and recent

trends indicate rising smoking prevalence rates among children and adolescents and earlier ages of initiation.

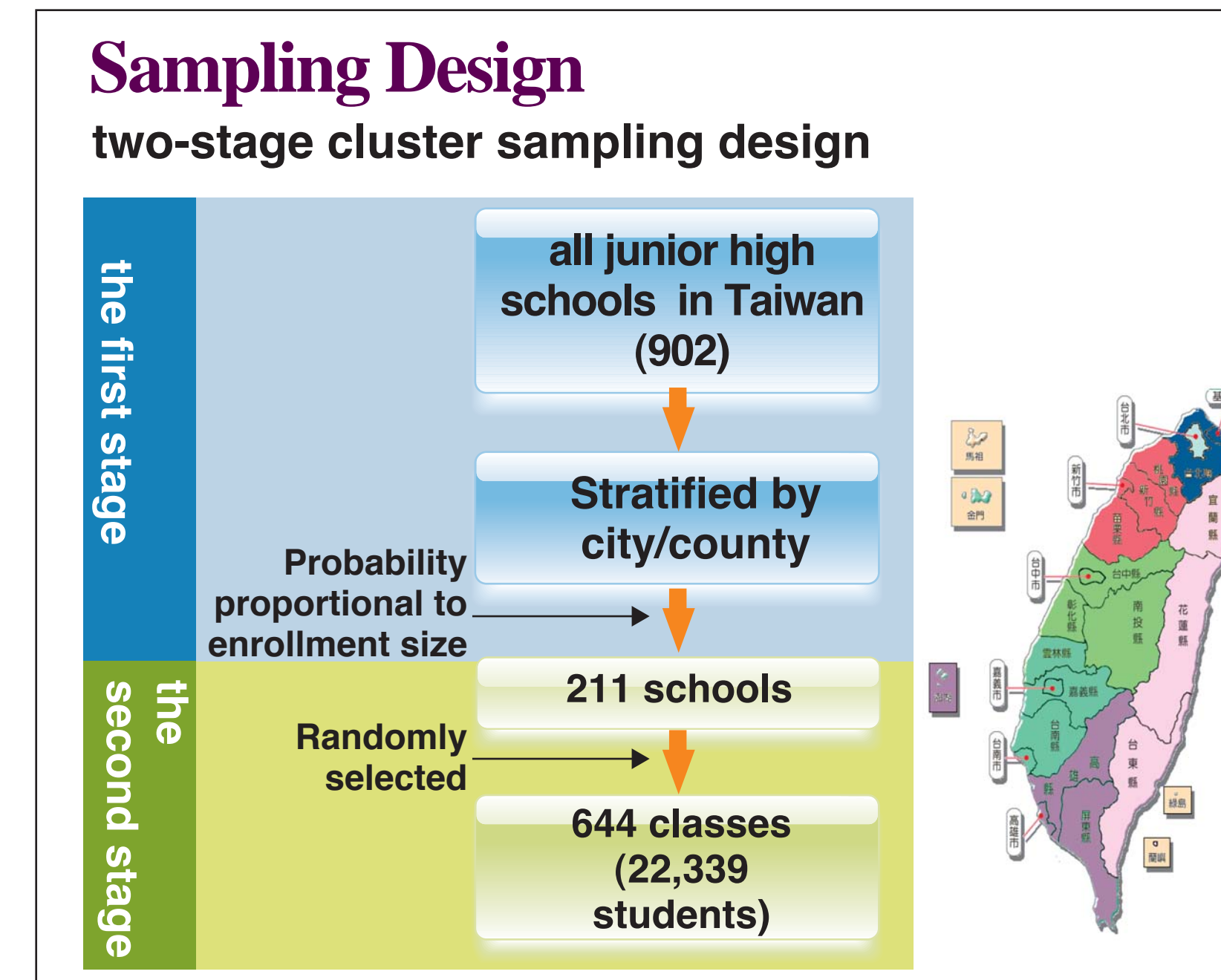
- Previous research on tobacco in Taiwan used a range of survey instruments, sampling frames, and data collection protocols. Findings from these studies may not be comparable with other data collected in Taiwan or other countries.

Purpose

- Based on the principles and design of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, we conducted a study which was school-based and employed a two-stage sampling design to produce city/county representative data to determine the prevalence of tobacco use among students aged 13-15 years in Taiwan.

Global Youth Tobacco Survey

- Developed by the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention since 1998
- A standardized methodology for constructing the sample frame, selecting schools and classes, preparing uniform questionnaires, and following consistent field procedures
- School based Two-stage cluster sample design
- Confidential self-administered questionnaire
- survey on students aged 13 to 15



Data collection/ Field operation

- 2004 Oct. ~ Dec.
- Field worker
 - 120 staff members
 - from local public health agencies at places where the sample schools were located
 - one-day training courses
- Other pre-fielding preparation
 - a notification letter to parents
 - an official inviting letter from the Ministry of Education
- Survey procedures
 - anonymous procedures
 - administered in the classroom
 - generic answer sheet

Study sample size and response rates among schools and students - Taiwan GYTS 2004

No. of schools sampled	No. of classes sampled	Response rate by schools (%)
211	644	100
No. of students sampled	No. of students participated	Response rate by students (%)
23072	22339	96.82

Prevalence of youth smoking

Percent advertising exposure

Environmental tobacco smoke

Access and availability

Key Findings

- 6.5% students smoke cigarettes
 - 12.6% nonsmokers are susceptible to smoke
- 77.9% smokers exposed to smoke in homes
 - 49.7% nonsmokers exposed to smoke in homes
- 90.4% smokers exposed to smoke in public places
 - 60.7% nonsmokers exposed to smoke in public places
- 34.4% smokers smoked at home
- 41% students purchased cigarettes in stores
 - 64.7% students were not refused to purchase cigarettes because of their ages
- 26.5% smokers owned an object with tobacco logo
 - 13% nonsmokers owned an object with tobacco logo

Recommendation

- The study suggest that the Taiwan should amend the Tobacco Hazard Prevention Act to prohibit smoking in indoor workplaces and public place, extensively prohibit activities regarding advertising and promotion of tobacco products, and ban the sale of tobacco products by store shelves which are directly accessible by youth. We also need more school tobacco control curricula to improve knowledge and attitude for the students.