

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SURVEY OF FEMALE BIDI WORKERS OF AJMER DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The truth about tobacco's health is simple. It kills when it is used as intended. Studies show that tobacco cause many health problems such as cancer, birth defects, nerve damage etc. The present study aims to identify the probable effects of tobacco on the health of female bidi workers of Ajmer. The female bidi workers were considered as the subject of this study who were actively involved in bidi rolling. Total 3150 female bidi workers were included in this study. There was a high prevalence of different types of health risks among these workers.

KEYWORDS: Bidi, bidi workers, health, tobacco.

INTRODUCTION

Bidi is the cheapest form of tobacco consumption. It is very popular among the people. It carries greater health risks because it delivers more nicotine, carbon mono oxide and tar than cigarettes (Yasmin et al., 2010). The production and consumption of tobacco products has alarmingly increased the health defects in human beings (Shimkhada and Peabody, 2003). Bidi is thin cigarette made of 0.2-0.3 gms of tobacco wrapped in tendu leaf and secured with a coloured thread on both ends. Many people are engaged in this occupation. The objective of our study was to evaluate the possible consequences of bidi tobacco on the health of female bidi workers of Ajmer district, Rajasthan.

METHODOLOGY

Total 3150 female bidi workers were considered as the subject of our study. All the workers were belonged to low income group and their working hours were long. Therefore, they were directly exposed to the dangers of

tobacco. Our study was carried out at Ajmer district in Rajasthan, India. A standard questionnaire related to health problems, use of tobacco and smoking habits was used to observe the health risks among the bidi workers. The filled up questions were collected and grouped for interpretation.

OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

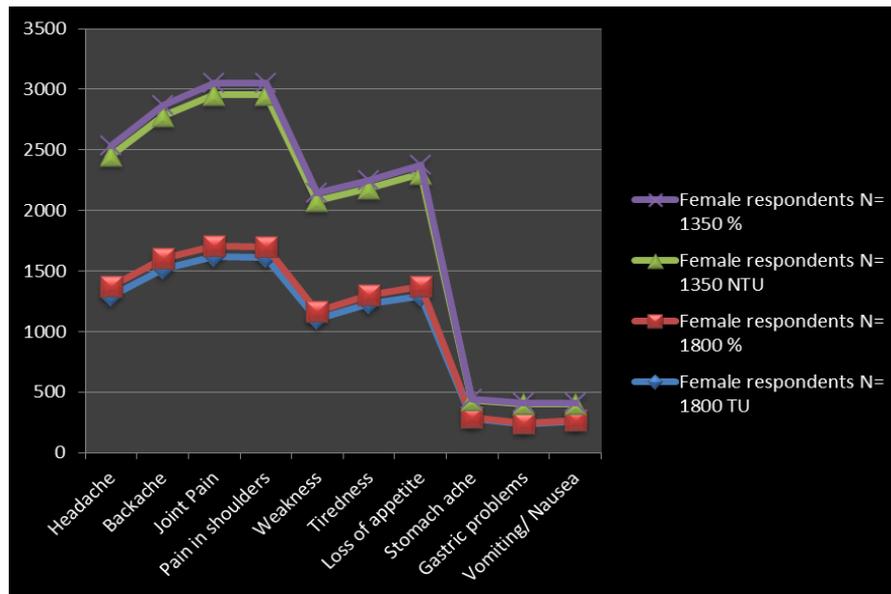
The present study included 3150 female bidi workers. Among these 1800 were Tobacco users (TU) and remaining 1350 were Non Tobacco Users (NTU).

Table: 01.

Work characteristics	
Socio-economic status	Poor
Working years	5-50 years
Working hours/day	2-10 hours
Bidi rolled/day	400-1200 per day

Table: 02.

Health Problems	Female respondents N= 1800		Female respondents N= 1350	
	TU	%	NTU	%
Headache	1297	72.4	1082	80.2
Backache	1517	84.3	1182	87.6
Joint Pain	1620	90.0	1248	92.5
Pain in shoulders	1612	89.6	1258	93.2
Weakness	1105	61.4	911	67.5
Tiredness	1229	68.3	886	65.7
Loss of appetite	1297	72.1	935	69.3
Stomach ache	279	15.5	139	10.3
Gastric problems	232	12.9	156	11.6
Vomiting/ Nausea	255	14.2	130	9.7



Graph 01: Common health manifestations of female bidi workers (TU & NTU).

Survey of occupational health profile revealed various health problems among the respondents. Study revealed that almost 90% TU and 92.5% NTU female respondents had developed pain in their different body parts. Apart from this, there are also other general health problems reported by respondents i.e. general weakness was found in 61.4% TU and 67.5% NTU, loss of appetite was found in 72.1% TU and 69.3% NTU female respondents.

DISCUSSION

Bidi manufacturing is the second largest industry in India (Shimkhada and Peabody, 2003). It provides employment to women and children mostly from the poor socioeconomic strata (Shimkhada and Peabody, 2003; Aghi, 2003). Parlewar et al., (2012) observed that 78.8% of the bidi rollers had aches in their body parts. Similarly Ghosh, (2005) also observed that almost all the workers had developed pain in various body parts. Our results are well corroborated with the study results of Ghosh, (2005) and Parlewar et al., (2012).

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