

Engaging adolescents in tobacco prevention: Outcomes of a student-led programme in a semi-urban school in Malaysia

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Track: Youth and Students

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ABSTRACT

Smoking and vaping are highly prevalent among Malaysian adolescents, especially males and those from lower socioeconomic groups. This study aims to implement brief educational intervention on smoking and vaping, delivered by undergraduate university students, among high school students in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. **Methods:** In this interventional study, undergraduate students received coaching on tobacco control issues. Following training, they planned and conducted a half-day programme for high school students at a local school. The programme included various engaging activities such as interactive talks, group sharing sessions, a crossword fun race, and anti-tobacco poster-making. To assess the impact of the intervention, pre- and post-programme questionnaires were administered to measure changes in students' knowledge and attitudes toward smoking and vaping. **Results:** 26 undergraduate counselling students were trained to conduct the programme. 90 male high school students from Form 3 and 4 participated in the programme. Only 17.8% knew that vape contains nicotine. At the end of the programme, there were improvement in knowledge (Mean difference, SD: 4.44, 2.31, $p < 0.001$) and attitude (Median, IQR: 38.0, 12.0 vs 26.0, 5.0, $p < 0.001$) on smoking and vaping. A total of 98.9% of students found the programme easy to understand, and 96.7% intended to apply what they learned. 95.6% reported willingness to advise peers against smoking and vaping. **Conclusion:** Male high school students in this semi-urban area had limited knowledge on tobacco and nicotine addiction. Undergraduate-led educational intervention demonstrates strong potentials in enhancing students' knowledge and attitudes. Continued efforts are needed to further reduce tobacco use among adolescents.

Keywords: Tobacco Use, Nicotine, Vaping, Adolescents, Malaysia