

Smoking and substance exposure among preparatory school children

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This study aimed to evaluate the problem of smoking and substance abuse among preparatory schoolchildren in an Egyptian sample. The prevalence of smoking was found to be 57% for boys and 22.2% for girls (smoked at least once). The prevalence of exposure to other substances was 52.3% in boys and 2.2% in girls. Alcohol was the only substance used (beer) by girls, but not in a regular pattern and other substances as hashish, benzodiazepines and volatile solvents tended to be abused by boys. The age of starting either smoking or substance abuse was below ten years in both sexes. The most common motives found behind both smoking and substance abuse were parent imitation, curiosity, peer group influence and imitating a star. The places where boys first smoked or abused other substances were more commonly outside home, but girls usually start at home. Both smoking and substance abuse were more prevalent among those who did not live with their parents together. For boys, smoking and substance abuse were more commonly found in rural and semi-rural areas with the reverse finding in the case of girls. Prevention programs and public policy measures are advised to start with schoolchildren who represent the actual population at risk.