

Tobacco Use Among Youth

Tobacco Reduction Program



The Issue

Tobacco use among adolescents is a public health problem worldwide (WHO, 2011). **Cigarette smoking continues to be the leading preventable cause of morbidity, mortality and impoverishment** ¹.

Despite extensive tobacco control efforts, research reveals that 30% of Canadian adolescents have tried smoking at least once by the time they reach 19 years of age². According to the 2012/13 Youth Smoking Survey 28.4% of never smokers in grades 6-9 in B.C. were susceptible to smoking.

Risk factors for teenage tobacco use include anxiety and depression³, low levels of self-esteem and optimism⁴, and social influences including peer, sibling, parental and school factors⁵. Adolescents with mental health problems report using tobacco more frequently than those without such problems (Sawyer et al., 2001).

Youth are also vulnerable to the influences of the tobacco industry, advertising, smoking in movies, flavoured tobacco, e-cigarettes and vaping. The 2012 U.S. Surgeon General Report provides strong evidence that counters the industry's claims that it does not market to children and adolescents. Among its major findings is the conclusion that advertising and promotional activities by tobacco companies cause the onset and continuation of smoking among adolescents and young adults. The U. S. Surgeon General Report Department of Health and Human Services (2014) expands on these findings, stating, "...the root cause of the smoking epidemic is also evident: The tobacco industry aggressively markets and promotes lethal and addictive products, and continues to recruit youth and young adults as new consumers of these products."



9.5%

of youth in BC aged 15-19 are current smokers

11.4%

of youth in BC age 20-24 are current smokers

13.2

the age of initiation for BC- compared to 13.6 nationwide



Smoking imagery in motion pictures has been identified as a cause of smoking initiation among adolescents

¹WHO, 2015

²(Health Canada Controlled Substances and Tobacco Directorate, 2010)

³Dudas, Hans, & Barabas, 2005; Goodman & Capitman, 2000

⁴Carvajal, Wiatrek, Evans, Knee, & Nash, 2000

⁵Donovan, 2004; Kuntsche, Knibbe, Gmel, & Engels, 2005; Tyas & Pederson, 1998