

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the knowledge of health risks, attitudes and practices of water pipe smoking among the Eritrean community in Kampala. The specific objectives of the study were: (i) determining the prevalence of water pipe smoking among the Eritrean community in Kampala, (ii) determining the level of knowledge of water pipe smoking health risks among the Eritrean community in Kampala, (iii) establishing the attitudes towards water pipe smoking among the Eritrean community in Kampala, and (iv) examining the practices of water pipe smoking among the Eritrean community in Kampala.

A quantitative approach and a cross-sectional survey design were chosen to address the research problem. Primary data was collected using interviewer-administered questionnaires from a convenient sample of 305 individuals. The data were processed and analyzed using descriptive techniques including frequencies, percentages, and cross tabulation with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS Version 16.0).

The results indicated that generally the prevalence of water pipe smoking among the Eritrean community is about 35 percent and is more common among males, adolescents and young adults in colleges and universities. The study also found that most respondents do not have adequate knowledge about the health risks of water pipe smoking. The study also found that most respondents have wrong attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about water pipe smoking. In terms of practice, most respondents have been engaged in WPS for 1 - 6 months, and they do it once in a week, for about 10 - 30 minutes.

Based on these findings, the study recommends the following to reverse the trend: including water pipe tobacco under the same regulations as cigarettes, increasing taxes on raw materials used on water pipes and associated raw materials, and banning water pipe smoking particularly in public places. In addition, awareness programs should be organized by government and non-

governmental organizations, especially targeting young adults, aimed at sensitizing the public about water pipe smoking hazards and health risks.