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Nicotine Dependence in Medical Students and Physicians in the Lakes Region

of

Rezan DEMİRALAY

Medical Sciences

Department of Chest Diseases and Tuberculosis, Faculty of Medicine, Süleyman Demirel University,
Isparta - TURKEY

 [Keywords](#)
 [Authors](#)



medsci@tubitak.gov.tr

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Abstract: This study was carried out to evaluate the level of physical nicotine dependence in medical students and physicians working in the Lakes region, Turkey. The standardized Fagerström test of nicotine dependence questionnaire was given to 135 physicians and 61 medical students who smoked daily. The rate of daily smoking was 28.4% in medical students and 33.7% in physicians. Average Fagerström test for nicotine dependence scores were 3.98 ± 2.69 for medical students, 3.69 ± 3.05 for general practitioners, 3.06 ± 2.23 for research assistants and 3.34 ± 2.88 for specialist physicians. Of the medical students, 15 (24.6%) indicated high nicotine dependence, 6 (9.8%) very high dependence; of the physicians, 23 (17.0%) indicated high nicotine dependence and 13 (9.6%) very high dependence. The mean nicotine dependence score of males was similar to that of females. The mean age of smoking initiation was 16.9 ± 2.3 years for medical students and 19.7 ± 4.3 years for physicians. The mean duration of unsuccessful attempts to stop smoking was 31.8 days in dependent subjects and 240.7 days in nondependent subjects. Thirty-four (58.6 %) dependent subjects and 91 (65.9%) nondependent subjects had attempted to stop smoking at least once, mostly due to future health risk. Thirty-two (55.2%) dependent subjects and 76 (55.1%) nondependent subjects reported that they experienced withdrawal symptoms during smoking cessation. The results suggest that there is a need to develop programmes to aid medical students and physicians to stop smoking. Equally, there is a need for programmes aimed at preventing or delaying the onset of cigarette use.

Key Words: Nicotine dependence, medical students, physicians

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