Alexandria Dorato

Tobacco Cessation Term Project

In a world full of stress and anxiety, people rely on nicotine to relax their mind which is why it is so addictive. Tobacco contains nicotine which releases dopamine to the brain. In the long run, smoking encourages the brain to turn off its mechanism for making dopamine which results in a decrease of dopamine supply. Counseling is provided for people with a smoking addiction but it’s like a never-ending cycle until the person really tries to quit. All the negative effects of smoking are known to a person with addiction but unfortunately, that is not going to stop them. The person has to be willing to and ready to quit, and it’s important to choose a right time in their life to ensure they will be able to quit. If a person were to quit in a rough position of their life, it’s likely they will fail when they are trying to quit. It’s most important that a person actually learns how to quit instead of just saying they want to quit because just talking about “wanting to” isn’t going to get them that far.

I decided to choose e-cigarettes as my topic because they are the most common type of nicotine abuse, especially among teenagers. E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that heat up a liquid to create a vaporized solution to inhale. Addiction is already an issue with traditional cigarettes and once e-cigarettes were established, addiction became even more of an issue. E-cigarettes are addictive for various reasons. First of all, they are too easy to access, and you can smoke them anywhere since the smell is very easy to hide. The variety of flavors lures teenagers to try them all which is a major problem. Becoming addicted at such a young age makes it even more difficult to quit in the future. Additionally, people believe that e-cigarettes are more cost effective than buying a pack of cigarettes since all you have to do is refill the cartridge and it also lasts a lot longer.

People perceive e-cigarettes as a healthier alternative than a traditional cigarette but little do they know, it’s just as bad and actually may be worse due to all the chemicals they contain. The main ingredient in an e-cigarette is nicotine. Nicotine is the ingredient that makes the product so addictive, and this addiction can develop very quickly. There is also propylene glycol, glycerol, ethylene glycol, vitamin E, flavorings, and heavy metals within e-cigarettes. Additionally, the aerosol created from e-cigarettes could also contain “toxic compounds such as formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, and acrolein due to glycerin’s thermo-degradation.” (Alshareef, H.Z., et al, 2021). These aerosols could be bad for anyone around the person that is smoking because they are inhaling the aerosols even though they aren’t physically intending to. This is what we call secondhand smoking.

It is well established that traditional cigarettes are known to be a risk factor in the development of periodontitis. E-cigarettes also negatively impact oral hygiene and overall, systemic health. Increased levels of plaque index, clinical attachment loss, marginal bone loss, and pocket depth were found in e-cigarette users. (Figueredo, C.A., et al, 2020). Vaping also causes the mouth to become dry (xerostomia) which is an issue because saliva is needed to prevent biofilm bacteria. Due to the lack of saliva, biofilm bacteria can increase resulting in a subgingival infection. If left untreated, gingivitis or periodontal disease can occur. Due to the sugar content within e-cigarettes, caries can develop. A high sugar intake is known to cause caries and some people aren’t aware that vaping can develop caries because they aren’t aware of all the ingredients. Acrolein is one of the many ingredients in vape juices and it is associated with lung damage, asthma, and possibly cancer. Diacetyl is the ingredient that may be linked to “popcorn lung, or damaged alveoli in the lungs’ air sacs”. (Collins, J. 2019). Nicotine is the main component in e-cigarettes and it is known to increase blood pressure and raises the chances of having a heart attack due to increased heart rates. (Alshareef, H.Z., et al, 2021). Additionally, inhaling an excessive amount of nicotine can result in nicotine poisoning (seizures, nausea, and vomiting). Since e-cigarettes are so easy to access, it becomes a common nature to constantly inhale the nicotine throughout the day increasing the probability of nicotine poisoning.

Providing smoking counseling to patients during their dental hygiene visits is the perfect time to try to motivate them to quit. Dental hygienists’ are eager and enthusiastic when providing oral hygiene instruction. They are also eager when addressing preventative measures to oral diseases. Hygienists’ have their best interest in their patients oral health and that is why they should stress the negative outcomes of smoking. The delivery is important, it has to be delivered in a motivating way that would make the patient actually put a stop to their addiction. The effects of smoking such as periodontal disease, oral cancer, respiratory infections, etc should be made clear to the patient. We don’t want to scare them, but we want to educate them in a motivating and positive way and ensure them that they could do it no matter how long they’ve had the addiction.

***(The next two paragraphs have quotations but they are my words to show how I would motivate a person to quit. That is why there is no citations in these paragraphs.)***

Some teenagers just want to “fit in” so they start smoking, quickly develop the addiction and now they’re two months into smoking. Most of the time, teenagers do not have a desire to smoke in the first place but when they see their friends doing it, they become curious and end up trying it. Since the addiction is fresh, it may be easier to try to motivate them to quit. It should be made understood that their health is so much more important than “fitting in”. A possible way to discuss smoking with a teenager who started two months ago could sound something like this “I really would like to assist you with quitting now so that you don’t develop issues in the future. This is the best time for you to quit because you just recently started. I know it’s going to be hard to do this since it surrounds you, but your health is very important to me and it should be just as important to you. I know it seems like it can’t hurt you now, but it can eventually cause complications that you don’t want to deal with later on.” It is important to make the teenager feel comfortable talking about their habit and also to make sure they understand why they need to quit as soon as possible.

Providing smoking counseling to a thirty-year-old patient that has been smoking for twelve years may be more difficult to motivate than someone who has just started. Why is it more difficult? Well, these people heard the negative effects and all the risks that smoking comes with for years which clearly hasn’t stopped them. Their problem is that they are so addicted to a point where they can’t imagine a life without smoking. As mentioned previously, it’s become a common nature to them, so they need extra counseling and motivation to finally quit. Something along these lines could be said to motivate someone who has been smoking for a long period of time. “Listen, I understand you have heard it all but it’s time that you quit. You’re still very young and it’s never too late to do this. I know you’re so used to it but let’s try to come up with a way to put a stop to this habit. Start by making changes in your routine, exercising more often can help keep your mind off of it. You can also find ways to distract you, like watching your favorite tv show or movie. You should also spend time with friends who do not smoke this way you don’t crave the feeling to smoke. Keep reminding yourself why you’re quitting and understand that this will be one of the best decisions you will make for your health”. It’s important to let the person know that the withdrawal period will eventually fade because the brain will get used to being without nicotine. Quitting does not happen overnight, it’s a difficult process but anyone could accomplish it.

References

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