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Smoking Cessation Counseling

In today's society, smoking has become a habit for many people. However, smoking leads to disease and disability. It harms almost every organ of the body. Although smoking is harmful, the number of deaths due to smoking has never decreased. There are various types of tobacco products on the market, such as Cigarettes, cigars, waterpipes, electronic cigarettes, chewing tobacco, and snuff.

Today, I want to discuss the “Cigarette” because it is the most common type of all tobacco products. A cigarette is a narrow cylinder containing [psychoactive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychoactive) material, typically [tobacco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tobacco), that is rolled into [thin paper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolling_paper) for [smoking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smoking) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cigarette). “Marlboro” is the best-selling cigarette brand in the U.S., we can see it in supermarkets, gas stations, and grocery stores. When people inhale the smoke, once the cigarette is lit, they pull a little smoke into the mouth and hold the smoke in the mouth for a moment. After that, remove the cigarette and position the hand, then blow out the smoke. In a word, the cigarette is ignited at one end, causing it to smolder; the resulting smoke is orally inhaled via the opposite end. Most modern cigarettes are filtered, although this does not make them safer (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cigarette).

The basic components of most cigarettes are tobacco, chemical additives, a filter, and paper wrapping (https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/products-ingredients-components/cigarettes). Cigarette smoke contains over 7,000 chemical compounds. Many of them are toxic, such as formaldehyde, arsenic, benzene, hydrogen cyanide, nicotine, carbon monoxide, ammonia, and other poisonous substances (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cigarette). There are over 70 of these substances are carcinogenic that mainly cause cancer. According to FDA’s report, “Every day, on average, about 2,000 youth under age 18 smoke their first cigarette and more than 300 youth under age 18 become daily smokers.” Why are they always addicted to smoking? The main reason is Nicotine. “Nicotine and Other Tobacco Compounds in Neurodegenerative and Psychiatric Diseases (Emilija et al., 2018).” Even though nicotine is not a carcinogenic, it is the most addictive substance and can cause addiction. “Identifying circulating metabolites related to cigarette smoking may provide insight into the biological mechanisms of smoking-related diseases and the nature of addiction (Fengyi et al., 2015).”

People who smoke are easy to produce dental biofilm, which can lead to gum disease. Smoking causes a lack of oxygen in the bloodstream, so the infected gums do not heal at normal rate. However, the gingival inflammation and bleeding often reduce or absent in smokers. Smoking is one of the most important risk factors to develop the periodontal disease which directly related to the number of cigarettes smoked and the number of years of smoking. In addition, smokers lose more teeth than a nonsmoker. “Only about 20% of people older than 65 years of age who have never smoked are toothless, whereas 41.3% of daily smokers older than 65 years are toothless” (Gehrig, 2020).

According to CDC’s report, “More than 16 million Americans are living with a disease caused by smoking.” That's a scary number. Smoking causes multiple cancers, cardiovascular and lung disease, stroke, diabetes, head and neck cancer, and skin disease (https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\_information/health\_effects/index.htm). However, second-hand smoke exposure contains the same bad chemicals that effect all nonsmokers, including Adult, Children, infants, and companion animals. Second-hand smoke usually causes chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), lung cancer, stroke, and coronary heart disease in adults and it increases the risk for acute respiratory infections, middle ear disease, asthma, respiratory symptoms, and slowed lung growth in children and even high risk for sudden infant death syndrome. The dogs, cats and other pets can also cause cancer by secondhand smoke. There are 1 out of 4 Americans with COPD never smoked cigarettes but they cause by second-hand smoke. “Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is characterized by systemic and local chronic inflammation and oxidative stress. The sources of the increased oxidative stress in COPD patients derive from the increased burden of inhaled oxidants such as cigarette smoke and other forms of particulate or gaseous air pollution (Ramzi et al., 2011).” “Cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 480,000 deaths per year in the U.S., including nearly 42,000 deaths resulting from secondhand smoke exposure (Gehrig, 2020).” Also, third-hand smoke also effects the health concern. The smoke often adheres to the hair, clothes, walls, and furniture that make people hard to aware.

As a dental hygienist, it is very important to provide smoking counseling to our patients during their dental hygiene visits. To ask patients whether they use tobacco and advise quitting can have a significant impact of patient’s oral and body health.

When counseling the patients about smoking, we can follow the "5 A’s module”: Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, and Arrange. Firstly, to ask every patient the status for using tobacco, then document it. Secondly, to use the clear, strong, personalized voice to advise tobacco user to quit smoking. Thirdly, to use a nonjudgmental approach by asking open-end questions to determine the patient’s willingness to quit smoking. Fourthly, to encourage patient to have a quit date or provide information on cessation programs and websites. Fifthly, to follow up with the patient to see how the progress of quitting smoking is (Gehrig, 2020). The entire counseling process should be no more than three minutes. Besides, clinical judgment is the most crucial part during counseling.

When I need to discuss quit smoking to a teenager who just started to smoke 2 months ago, I will use a strong and powerful tone to talk to him/her. Many teenagers are in a rebellious stage and they may not know how much harm smoking can be. I would patiently explain to him/her the harmful effects of smoking and try to understand why he/she wants to smoke. Is it numbness to follow the trend or the stress of studying? Try to understand the inner workings of a teenager's mind is the best way to help him/her quit smoking.

When I need to discuss quit smoking with a 30-year-old adult who has been smoking for 12 years, I would talk to him in a calm, persuasive and suggestive tone. Most adults are aware of the dangers of smoking, but if they have been smoking for a long time, it can be difficult to quit. If he/she smokes because of the pressure of work and life, then I would suggest that he/she can get more exercise to relieve the addiction for smoking. At this point, it is important to encourage him/her and let him/her know that he/she can quit smoking as long as he/she is persistent. I will monitor and support him/her, and always talk to him/her about the benefits of quitting smoking.

Besides, I learned a lot from this assignment. It is very benefit me because it made me learn about many people die every year because of smoking, including first-hand, second-hand, and even third-hand smoke. Also, as a dental hygienist, it taught me that it is very important to help patients quit smoking. My father was a smoker for over 40 years and he used to smoke cigarettes. Much like the research I did, several of his teeth fell out when he was 60 years old because smoking caused him to have severe periodontal disease. Before writing this assignment, I only knew that smoking affects the lungs, I didn't know that it causes other diseases. Now, I must convince my dad to quit smoking. In this way, I will feel more comfortable to communicate with my smoking patients in the future and let them know, “It's never too late to quit.”

Overall, smoking has many harmful effects on our oral and body health. As a dental professional, what we can do is to find out if our patients smoke, and if so, inform them about the dangers of smoking so that we can help reduce the number of smokers.

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