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Part 1: Literature Review

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Part 2:

The use of tobacco products keeps increasing, from new inventions like electronic cigarettes to old inventions of cigars and cigarillos. Today I will be talking about cigarettes. Just about 34 million US adults smoke cigarettes. (CDC.gov) With cigarettes, it is quite interesting how it does not only affect the individual burning the cigarette, but it also affects those surrounding them. Secondhand smoke is known to be just as fatal and damaging when compared to firsthand smokers.

I chose this tobacco product because I was intrigued to learn more about how such a small thing as a cigarette can cause so much harm. Coming from an Asian background, I grew up seeing, mostly men smoking one pack a day. I never understood the effects it had on them or if it affected us as kids. I later came to the conclusion when my little cousin who was only 5 years old had to be hospitalized due to secondhand smoke. This was an eye-opener to my uncle who would smoke one pack a day to want to reduce the amount. Surprisingly to me that this turn of events did not make him want to stop smoking cigarettes all at once, but that can be further investigated to what is embedded in these small rolls of paper that we call cigarettes.

The main ingredient that makes up a cigarette is tobacco. Tobacco leaves are dried and utilized. These leaves contain nicotine, which is the main source of what causes addiction in tobacco product users. In cigarettes, there are quite a lot of other ingredients that are known to be poisonous for day-to-day consumers. Just listing a few and where they are seen in our day-to-day; acetone- used for nail polish removing, ammonia- home cleaning product, lead- found in batteries, carbon monoxide- car exhaust fumes, and much more that goes up to just about 600 ingredients. Since cigarettes are burned, these ingredients make up just about 7,000 chemicals when inhaled affecting someone’s health and their oral health.

Tobacco use is a risk factor for a lot of diseases like cancer, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and much more systemic health compromises. Smoking cigarettes can cause just about any type of cancer in your body. Toxins that are welcomed into the human body when smoking causes it to attack the body. The toxins break down your immune system letting it become weak and vulnerable. In addition to making your body more susceptible to diseases, it also alters your DNA. DNA and its regular cell growth are altered, and it can advance the production of cells, ultimately leading to the abundance of cells creating a tumor. As for heart disease, there are 1 in every 4 deaths that were caused by cigarette smoking. (CDC.gov) This is by targeting the body’s arteries, leading to plaque buildup. When plaque buildup in the arteries prevents blood to flow through the blood vessels, this is known as Atherosclerosis. As for pulmonary disease, smoking affects how your lungs receive oxygen and release carbon dioxide. Since toxins from cigarettes are inhaled the lungs tend to lose their elasticity and results in the difficulty of breathing properly having the effect of short breathing. All these systemic health-compromising diseases can contribute to firsthand smokers and secondhand smokers if constantly being exposed to cigarette smoke.

Looking into oral health and how smoking cigarettes contributes to the downfall of good oral health. Smoking cigarettes causes bad breath, the coloring of teeth, gingivitis, and periodontitis. The substance of tar that comes from the burning of tobacco tends to stay on your teeth making them look stained with a light to dark brown color. Staining would most likely appear on the cervical third of the crown, due to the prominence of biofilm in this area causing the coloring to lodge onto the biofilm. With biofilm buildup inflammation occurs in the gingiva, causing pain and redness. Gingivitis can be treated with biofilm removal. The gingiva can return to normal when frequently treated, but on the contrary, if gingivitis is not treated and biofilm keeps increasing then it can result in periodontitis with pocket depths of 5mm and up.

All these health-impacting factors can be avoided with education. It is important to inform a patient about smoking during their dental hygiene visits to bring awareness of such terrible effects smoking has to the body. In recent years there have been trends relating to tobacco products, if the individual is not educated enough on the effects of tobacco in the body it could result in systemic damage. Knowing what is safe to enter your body and what is not can save a person’s life.

For a teenager that just started smoking, the need for education and the demonstration of how harmful smoking cigarettes can be would contribute to smoking cessation. Knowing that curing something early on could save their life and any oral health issues can always be reversed once the individual stops smoking. As for an adult that has been smoking for 12 years can be difficult to make them stop smoking. Since that is all they had known to do for years the adult might be more stubborn to quit. I had the outlook that if they wanted to quit, they could have, but with nicotine, it can be somehow out of their control to choose to quit since it is so addicting. Quitting an addiction takes steps, it cannot just be done all at once. There are quite a few products that can reduce the craving for nicotine. Nicotine patches and nicotine gum are used to slowly wean off the dependability of nicotine. For support, there are quite a few support groups that involve quitters. Being around a group of people that are experiencing the same things as you can help motivate the act of quitting smoking.

Part 3: Reflection

From this assignment, I took the fact that smoking can cause more deaths and systemic issues than I would have imagined. Also, learning the significance nicotine has on people and how it has them so drawn to it like they cannot live without it. From this assignment knowing how to communicate with a tobacco consumer is important. Knowing how to drive them to the right path of quitting or at least motivating them to do so for their benefit.

Like I had mentioned before coming from Asian background smoking cigarettes is quite common among males. Close family friends would smoke about one pack of cigarettes a day, which thinking about it now is insane. Knowing how much damage burning a cigarette takes on the body makes me concern for their health and those around them, since secondhand smoking is just as harmful.

I would say I feel just a little more comfortable having a conversation with future patients about smoking cessation. Knowing how to properly guide them away from such a harmful object through proper counseling. Utilizing the 5 A’s; ask, advise, assess, assist, and arrange. As well as being there for any withdrawals that may occur on the road to recovery. Quitting is not an easy thing to do when your body is so used to the intake of nicotine but having someone to guide you even when you have a few setbacks can still make it possible to quit smoking for good.

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