

PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS AND HABITUAL SMOKING IN GREEK HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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Introduction: Greece presents the highest prevalence of smokers among Western European countries with a percentage of 37.6 %. Studies investigating the psychological parameters associated with habitual smoking, both among the general population as well as among health professionals are focused on anxious and depressive symptoms, without taking into account other possible psychological parameters.

Aims: To assess the implication of psychological parameters in the preservation and termination of habitual smoking.

Methods: One hundred and four health professionals were randomly selected and asked to fill out the Symptom Check List - 90 - R (SCL-90R) [1]. Participant demographics, smoking habits, amount of daily cigarette consumption, and whether or not participants displayed an intention or effort to quit smoking were all taken into account.

Results: Among smokers, 50% displayed an intention to quit smoking. Smokers who intended to quit displayed the highest levels in subscales of somatization, anxiety, depression and anger. Daily cigarette consumption, among smokers, showed a positive correlation to subscales of obsessive-compulsive symptoms, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety as well as of anger, paranoid ideation and psychoticism.

Conclusions: The fact that one in two smokers indicates an intention to quit smoking is both interesting and optimistic regarding possible termination of the smoking habit. Habitual smoking is positively correlated to psychological parameters that should be taken into account when drafting a smoking intervention programme.

References:

1. Tselebis A, Bratis D, et al. Psychological symptom patterns and vital exhaustion in outpatients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. *Ann Gen Psychiatry*. 2011 Dec 6;10:32.