SMOKING INTENTION IN MALE AND FEMALE YOUNG ADULTS

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Cigarette smoking seem to be one of the primary preventable cause of mortality and morbidity (Crawford, 2001). These findings increased the development of smoking prevention and health promotion programs (Bienen, McCullogh, Keeler and Nyman, 2000). A better comprehension of the determinants of smoking intention seems to be important to increase the efficacy of these intervention programs (Nguyen et al., 1998).

The aim of the present study was to identify the predictors of smoking intention in male and female young adults. This research wants to analyze whether the intention to adopt this risk behavior was associated with the variables from the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control), risk perception, self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Method
A sample of about 300 young smokers completed the Italian version of a questionnaire based on Ajzen’s TPB (1991), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and the General Self-efficacy Scale (Sillan, Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995). The data have been subjected to multiple regression analysis.

Results
Risk perception and subjective norms (family influences) emerge as significant predictors of smoking intention (p<.001). Self-esteem influences the intention to quit smoking (p<.05). Perceived behavioral control seems to be a significant predictor of smoking behavior (p<.01). Gender differences will be presented.

Conclusions
A better comprehension of smoking intention determinants in young males and females could contribute to increase the efficacy of smoking prevention and health promotion programs. Further research is needed to lead additional support to our findings.

LEVEL OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN ADULTS QUITTING SMOKING

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Self-Determination Theory (SDT) assumes that psychological health and well-being are intimately related to individual’s autonomy or self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In particular, individual’s self-determination has been associated with health care behaviors, such as “quit smoking”. In an ongoing research project, we have tried to understand smoking cessation by examining the degree to which the individual shows an autonomous (intrinsic and internalized reasons) versus controlled (extrinsic and coercive reasons) regulation of behavior in this domain. The aim of the present study was to characterize the motivational orientation (in particular the degree of autonomy) of a group of smokers entering a clinical cessation program. The degree to which a person’s motivation for not smoking is relatively autonomous will bear important implications for planning intervention, with high levels of autonomy facilitating optimal outcomes. We developed self-determination for not smoking using TSRQ (Williams, Cox, Koudes, & Deci, 1995; Ryan & Connell, 1989) sub-scales: autonomous orientation, controlled orientation, and a motivation applied in a sample of adults in a clinic trial for smoking cessation. Perceived competence, which is also emphasized by this theory, (SDT) was also assessed using related questionnaires (the PCS). We constructed Portuguese versions of these instruments, and analyzed alpha reliabilities. Moreover, we examined differences in initial motivations, related to social, physical and psychological individual characteristics, such as sex, age, fagerstrom test, number of cigarettes per day, number of years smoking.

Results will be discussed in light of SDT theoretical framework.