



# *La prevención educativa del tabaquismo en adolescentes*

## *Educational prevention of smoking in adolescents*

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### **Resumen**

La investigación está referida a los graves daños que ocasiona el tabaquismo a la salud, no sólo a quienes fuman, sino también a aquellos que en forma involuntaria se ven expuestos al humo del tabaco, concebida para ofrecer actividades psicopedagógicas para la prevención educativa del tabaquismo en adolescentes. Para evaluar el estudio diagnóstico de la situación se emplearon diferentes métodos y técnicas investigativas que permitieron precisar que existen insuficiencias en el conocimiento por parte de los adolescentes de los riesgos que genera el tabaquismo. Las actividades psicopedagógicas que se proponen permitirán lograr mejor nivel de preparación y estilo de vida más saludables.

**Palabras clave:** Tabaquismo; Prevención; Prevención educativa; Actividades psicopedagógicas;

### **Abstract**

The research refers to the serious damage that smoking causes to health, not only to those who smoke, but also to those who are involuntarily exposed to tobacco smoke, conceived to offer psycho-pedagogical activities for the educational prevention of smoking in teenagers. To evaluate the diagnostic study of the situation, different methods and investigative techniques were used that made it possible to specify that there are inadequacies in the knowledge of adolescents of the risks generated by smoking. The psycho-pedagogical activities that are proposed will allow to achieve a better level of preparation and a healthier lifestyle.

**Keywords:** Smoking; Prevention; Educational prevention; Psychopedagogical activities

## Introduction

Of all the most pressing emerging health problems in the National Education System, smoking occupies a special place. It is an addiction that for a long time was socially tolerated. Today, however, there is scientific evidence that demonstrates the serious health damage it causes, not only to those who smoke, but also to those who are involuntarily exposed to tobacco smoke.

Smoking is a worldwide health problem, which is aggravated when it occurs in adolescents, who are at a disadvantage due to the socio-psychological characteristics that mark this stage of the development of the life cycle.

Several studies have shown that tobacco consumption frequently begins in early adolescence, as it is a drug addiction with consequences in the individual, family and social spheres, as stated by Carvajal (2006).

There is scientific evidence of the damage caused to health and the economy, as well as the benefits of smoke-free environments. The National System of Education has joined with all the people in the unpostponable fight to defend the present and the future, playing a transcendental role in confronting the scourge of drugs, specifically smoking.

In this struggle of the whole people, the school, the family, the community close ranks and form an indestructible protective shield, and the teacher must be an example and guide by his conduct, by his preparation and by his permanent political, ideological and cultural activism.

Castro (2002) reaffirms this by stating:

Today it is a matter of perfecting the work done and starting from entirely new ideas and concepts. Today we are looking for what should be and will be an educational system that increasingly corresponds to equality, full justice, self-esteem and the moral and social needs of citizens in the model of society that the Cuban people have proposed to create. (p. 4).

Different projects in support of the National Education System's Health Promotion and Education Program are being developed to strengthen preventive work in schools for the prevention of smoking.

An important starting point is to involve teachers in the teaching of curricular anti-tobacco education, but logically, this activity remains in the hands of a small number of teachers, which is why emphasis should be placed on working with the entire teaching staff.

The school, in its curricular design, is responsible for promoting health promotion in a process that allows students to increase control over their health in order to improve it through the treatment of related topics, creating environments that favor the development of personal skills, reinforcing community action, systematically reorienting students in this direction.

According to Garcia (2012), who made a balance to evaluate the rate of consumption in society, argues that society is increasingly better informed, consumption rates are increasing, especially among adolescents and women, who smoke as a symbol of rebellion, personality affirmation, freedom or social integration. Today, society is more aware of the harmful effects of tobacco and cigarettes, and adolescents are consuming them more and more frequently. Cigars can be found in almost any formal or informal store, available even to underage persons or packaged individually, despite the fact that their sale is prohibited under this modality.

At the international level, it has been proven that the treatment of the subject requires behavioral changes; only with educational actions, remarkable results are not achieved. The systematization carried out on the subject allowed contracting the legal role of the state by taking into account the effectiveness that is produced from the combination of the binomial Education-Legislation, for such reason in the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba (2019), the need to intensify the legal mechanism is exposed, so that it becomes the necessary support of educational work.

The risk of drug use increases in an accelerated way during periods of transition, such as a change of school, moving, or parents' divorce.

Based on the reasons given, the objective is aimed at implementing psycho-pedagogical activities for the educational prevention of smoking among adolescents at Sergio Eloy Correa Junior High School in Guantanamo municipality.

## **Development**

In Cuba, educational prevention has been treated from different points of view at different times. It was understood that the causes of people's behaviors were associated with hereditary reasons: racial, pathological, among others, without considering the influences of prevailing socioeconomic relations that generated misinformation, ignorance and insufficient educational influences.

During the first stage of adolescence, when children move from elementary school to Junior High School, they face new social and academic challenges. Often in this period, adolescents are exposed to gateway drugs such as cigarettes.

At the same time, many behaviors that are normal aspects of development, such as doing something risky or reckless, can increase adolescents' tendencies to experiment. Some adolescents may give in to peer pressure and engage in imitation cigarette smoking to reduce their anxiety at social events or to improve their appearance.

Due to the fact that adolescents' judgment and decision-making abilities are not fully developed, their ability to accurately assess risks and make sound decisions about cigarette smoking may still be limited.

Preventive work in recent years has been strengthened and refined, however, the challenges faced in the economic and social order impose renewed approaches and, therefore, methods and styles of educational direction in correspondence with the changes objectively occurring in society.

Therefore, efficiency of educational prevention work is expressed in the quality of the pedagogical process. At present, it has reached an extraordinary social importance, in the educational field it is a fundamental direction of the work of the Ministry of Education.

It is about developing a preventive pedagogy that offers theoretical and practical elements to avoid the emergence of difficulties, whether in learning, specific areas, or in their behavior; and, in case they exist, to avoid negative consequences: psychological, pedagogical and social.

In the National Education System and specifically in the Junior High School subsystem, prevention is an essential way to avoid the appearance of alterations that compromise the personal development of adolescents. This shows that prevention is essential in the formation of personality in adolescence, in order to achieve correct ways of acting, responsible behavior, healthy lifestyles, in accordance with the principles of Cuban society.

However, although there is no consensus on a specific definition of this concept, its essence lies in anticipating problems related to the education of learners, hence the use of terminology such as: know, anticipate, prevent, act in a timely manner, stimulate.

The following definition of prevention provided by Gayle (2008) is assumed: "It means taking whatever measures are necessary to prevent developmental deficiencies from occurring or that when they do occur, they do not have negative physical, psychological or social consequences" (p. 42).

It is to develop a social practice aimed at reducing and avoiding risk factors, strengthening the response capacity and autonomy of individuals and communities, in order to expand the range of

security in their development, moving away the limits from which the alteration begins to become a threat; it is to prepare and have what is necessary, in advance, it is to act so that a problem does not appear, it is to anticipate in a creative way.

Therefore, prevention in Junior High School allows guiding adolescents towards the manifestation of correct behavioral patterns in the face of tobacco use in the context in which they develop.

Adolescence is a stage in the life of the human being, in which systematic changes occur related to the attitudes assumed by young people in psychological, physiological, sociocultural and biological aspects.

According to the criteria of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2010), an adolescent is conventionally considered to be any person whose age is between 10 and 20 years, in accordance with sexual changes, physical transformations, the social moment in which they develop and the balance that occurs between the different interests, motivations, objectives and aspirations of this group, in the social space and cultural scenario where they spend the most important years of their human development. Among the main health disorders in adolescents are disorders in psychosocial adaptation, including smoking addiction.

According to Acosta (2009),

Tobacco use is an addiction and nicotine is the addictive drug. Tobacco product consumption is a complex, learned behavior, integrated with daily life and related to the way the smoker relates to the world. (P. 84).

Numbers of daily activities, thoughts and emotions act as powerful cues to smoke, smoking behavior is influenced by environmental factors, acceptance of smoking in the home, friendships, at work and community norms.

Research in the world has usually shown that tobacco use begins in early adolescence, a situation that causes an increase in future health problems, and problems have also been detected in children and adolescents who smoke with behavioral disorders (aggressive and shy), also interpreted as risk behaviors, especially for the subsequent consumption of other substances.

Nazutti's (2009) contribution argues that adolescents start smoking during adolescence due to experimentation and the feeling of trying new things, and also due to social pressure from the peer group with which the individual interacts, and it is generally at this time when the habit is consolidated, to finally reach habitual consumption in adulthood.

This is why it is recommended to carry out a series of psycho-pedagogical activities for the educational prevention of smoking in adolescents as well as to improve their healthier lifestyle.

### **Methods and instruments**

The research was carried out at the Junior High School Sergio Eloy Correa, from which a population of eight teachers working in the eighth grade and 115 students of the grade were taken. The eight teachers working in the eighth grade and the 32 adolescents in group 1, representing 27.8% of the total, were chosen as the sample.

After applying the instruments to the selected sample, the results were as follows:

45% of the teachers stated that they do not always have all the psycho-pedagogical and preventive resources available to attend to adolescents identified as smokers. 60% of the teachers stated that the controlled teaching activities lacked joint demonstrations that would favor a better intervention. 36.5% of the teachers state that they do not have any pamphlet or other teaching material that would help them to carry out a successful preventive work. 55% of teachers report receiving little psycho-pedagogical guidance for the prevention of smoking among adolescents, which does not allow them to adequately develop the work of educational prevention.

In the classes visited, it was found that 35% of the teachers do not attend to adolescents identified as smokers from the beginning of the process, and 20% do not adequately apply educational methods for their treatment.

Among the methods and techniques used to obtain the information, interviews were conducted with managers and teachers, who represent 100% of the sample, who recognize parent meetings, family education schools, home visits and intervention with adolescents as the most commonly used methods for preventive work. Ninety-eight percent of the managers interviewed reflect that the teacher preparation system in this area is very superficial and does not systematically work with the families of adolescents who use this substance.

The documentary analyses carried out made it possible to identify the main weaknesses presented in the initial diagnosis:

- 42 % of teachers present lack of preparation to carry out smoking prevention.
- 62% of the teachers do not use the appropriate ways, methods and procedures to prevent smoking among adolescents.

- 48% of teachers do not show risk perception of the causes that generate smoking among adolescents, so actions derived from the occurrence of incidents are not always incorporated in the school's Risk Prevention Plan.

The inadequacies detected, as gaps that have not yet been resolved, show the need to propose new tools that allow teachers, based on the potential of the curricula, to address the educational prevention of smoking among adolescents.

### **Proposal**

In order for smoking prevention to be successful, it is necessary to understand why this kind of behavior develops. With this knowledge we will be able to act on those variables that can be modified.

An essential element in the prevention of smoking is the perception of risk as a psychological configuration that mediates the process of decision-making by the subject in relation to tobacco consumption.

In order to elaborate each of the activities, the diagnosis of the adolescents under investigation was taken into account, so that the activities are contextualized and flexible, which will allow enriching the educational potentialities.

For the design of the psycho-pedagogical activities we started from the psycho-pedagogical needs that have their origin in the dynamics of the teaching-learning process, when deficiencies or absence of elements for an efficient functioning are perceived, it is a conflictive situation that is characterized by the attraction towards phenomena or situations, which can be satisfied during and through the use of psychological and pedagogical tools giving course with them to the development of the personality.

All sessions begin with a basic game of presentation that will help to become aware of their individual and group identity, approaching the rest of the group and allowing them to enter into the energy of the course and open their eyes to the specific subject of each session.

The topics to work on with the adolescents are aimed at:

- Debate criteria and assessments on smoking from the elaboration of a summary taking into account the importance for society to provide support to addicted people.
- Discuss educational messages through the use of a cartoon.

- Create signs representing smoke-free spaces and place them in public places at school and in the community.
- Conduct interviews with adolescents.
- Recognize the harmful consequences of tobacco use.
- Write a letter to a friend or family member to stop smoking.

**Psycho-pedagogical activities for the educational prevention of smoking among adolescents at Sergio Eloy Correa Junior High School.**

**Activity # 1**

**Title:** If you decide for life, love will grow, no to smoking.

**Objective:** To discuss criteria and evaluations on smoking based on the elaboration of a summary taking into account the importance for society to provide support to addicted people.

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Methodology for its instrumentation:** the following phrase will be presented at the beginning:

"Love, like the tree, has to pass from seed to sapling, to flower and fruit" José Martí.

After listening to this phrase by José Martí, which can be found in the Collected Works Volume 20, the activity will begin with the presentation of the observation guide of the documentary: Addictions: The Wrong Way, followed by the screening of the documentary. At the end, the following questions will be asked: What are the consequences of smoking for the people who suffer from it and what are the consequences for society? How would you help people who suffer from this habit? Why is it important that in the future they show a good example to their children? Next, the participants will be given cards with beautiful messages for living in harmony, which will appear on a visible banner with the following structure:

Love each other

Wishing good things

Start new projects

Taking care of our health

Trusting ourselves

Prevent bad actions

To forget the damage

Do not allow mistreatment

Avoid bad moments

Knowing how to live happily

What message do these expressions bring to you? It will be commented that each of these expressions brings a positive and enterprising message to live healthily, to love those around us and to propose new life projects. But insist that they should look carefully at the first letter of each sentence; they will notice that a word is formed. ADDICTIONS What are addictions? By listening to different criteria, the search for this word in the dictionary will be oriented. Addiction: physical or psychological dependence resulting from habitual consumption; it applies especially to drugs. Do you know the types of addictions that exist? There are several types of addictions, among them smoking. Why do you think people create addictions to toxic habits?

**Evaluation:** will be done through student participation in the activity.

## **Activity # 2**

**Title:** The Story of Goya

**Objective:** To discuss educational messages through the use of a cartoon.

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Methodology:** We will begin by inviting them to learn about the history of Goya, a passage from the beautiful book My Grandmother Chicha's Shire. This work has 32 beautiful chapters; in one of them the nice boy narrates the real story of addiction to tobacco of a member of his family. Here you will be confronted with a story that you can witness at any time in your lives.

### **Questions:**

Who was Goya?

What was he like physically?

What sadness did Goya hold in his heart?

What caused this intense sadness?

Do you consider grandmother Chicha's attitude correct. Why?

What would you do if you were ever near a person addicted to tobacco?

To understand the people addicted to tobacco, those we are surrounded by in different parts of our city and those who sometimes accompany us in our families, are worthy of our support, our love and understanding. Smoking is a disease considered as harmful, as it reaches the same rank as cancer and cardiovascular diseases, the main causes of death, as a worldwide health problem.

Making them understand that life is beautiful and keeping ourselves strong and healthy is the most exquisite way to resolve the hard blows that life prepares for us.

It is recommended to elaborate a summary highlighting why it is necessary to help people.

We invite you to enjoy the verse that will be read below.

Helping an addicted person

It is an act of humanity,

Of sanity and perseverance

For the good of society.

An addict is a human being

Who needs

Of your love, your understanding,

Your trust and your loyalty.

When you see them on the streets,

Don't change direction,

Shake your hand frankly,

And dwell in their heart.

Addictions are already

An evil of society

But your dose of love

Help them heal.

With the reading of this verse we end the activity.

**Evaluation:** through the PNI technique (Positive, Negative, Interesting).

### **Activity # 3**

**Title:** Space without cigarettes

**Objective:** To make signs representing smoke-free spaces and place them in public places in the school and community.

**Duration:** 1 hour

Methodology for its implementation: the teacher invites the students to create their own signs, which should represent a smoke-free space, or similar, and place them in enclosed spaces of public

use frequented by them as well as in the community where they live, as shown in image 1. This activity can be carried out on May 31, known as World No Tobacco Day.

It is also suggested that they can leave educational messages near the signs.

Image 1. No smoking space



Source: Own elaboration, adapted from Navarro, 2011.

And they will be asked: What does this ad want to convey?

What does the image that appears mean?

**What does the text mean?**

**Evaluation:** it will be done through the participation of the students in the activity.

#### **Activity # 4**

**Title:** Journey of ideas

**Objective:** To conduct interviews with teenagers.

**Duration:** 45 minutes

Methodology for its implementation: students will be given five small pieces of paper on which they should write their knowledge about the proposed topic: "What do we know about TOBACISM? It is important that the students write on each of the cards that they have a specific idea about the topic (do not mix ideas, as this makes it difficult to order them later). Minutes later, the teacher asks each student to read one of their cards. Then they will be written on the blackboard where they will be grouped and classified in columns the cards of the other students in which related or similar ideas are mentioned.

At the end, several columns or groups of ideas will be obtained that will indicate where most of the group's knowledge is concentrated, which will allow the teacher to select the contents to carry out the learning process in a gradual way. Each group of cards can be placed on a poster that will remain in the classroom and serve as a launching pad for each topic that will be deepened in subsequent classes.

**Evaluation:** will be done through student participation in the activity.

### Activity # 5

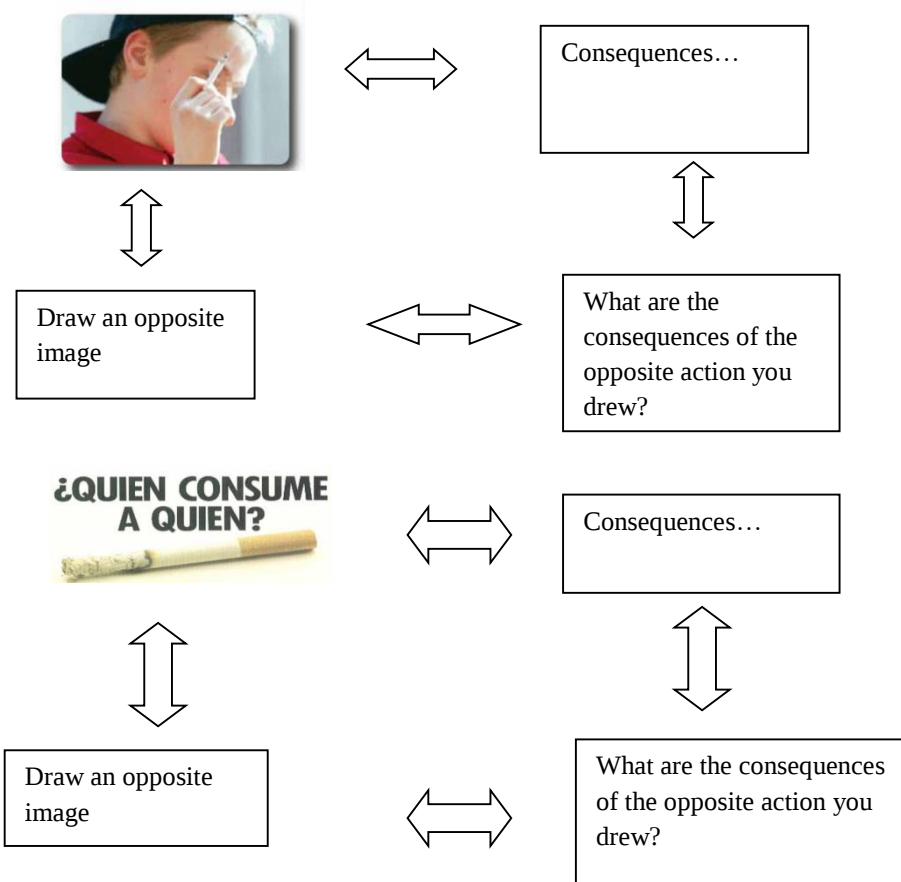
**Title:** Let's talk about smoking.

**Objective:** To recognize the harmful consequences of tobacco consumption.

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Methodology:** The following illustrations will be presented at the beginning of the activity:

Causes and Consequences



Source: Self- made

The consequences of the actions shown in the illustrations will be explained, asking the student to imagine the opposite action to the one shown in the image and then write down what would happen.

**Evaluation:** will be done through the student's participation in the activity.

### Activity # 6

**Title:** My Letter

**Objective:** To write a letter to a friend or family member to stop smoking.

**Duration:** 45 minutes

Methodology for its implementation: Students are invited to write a letter to a loved one, relative or friend trying to convince him/her to quit smoking. The letters will be written according to the pedagogical characteristics of the students' age group. A "mailbox" will be prepared for the work. Each student can go through and receive a letter different from the one he/she wrote and read it to the group. A debate on the topic is then initiated, where everyone contributes their knowledge, feelings and positions. The teacher moderates the topics that arise, clarifying doubts and giving the floor to those who wish to speak.

The best letters are selected to be written as posters and displayed in the classroom or school.

Image 3. The Postman



*Source: Own elaboration, adapted from Acosta, 2009.*

**Evaluation:** will be carried out through the participation of the students in the activities. The teacher will give each student a card with three categories to mark the evaluation obtained during the development of the activity. At the end of the activity, the students who achieve the best results will be encouraged.

## Conclusions

Smoking prevention in adolescents is recognized as an essential basis for healthier lifestyles, and therefore the theoretical and methodological foundations that support the work are systematized and taken from the contributions of various researchers from the World Health Organization, depending on the content and other social groupings. The diagnosis, by means of observation,

survey, interview and documentary analysis, proved that there are insufficiencies in the prevention of smoking among adolescents, seen in the insufficient preparation of teachers in the use of educational and preventive methods, in correspondence with the psycho-pedagogical diagnosis of adolescents and in the unity of influences with the family, for a greater knowledge and better health habits. The concretion in practice of the elaborated activities showed that they are feasible and effective, contributed to form healthier behaviors and to achieve in adolescents healthier lifestyles for their integral personal development, as well as greater knowledge of the consequences of smoking for human health.

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