

Re: Prevalence and Determinants of Waterpipe ('sheesha') Tobacco use among Adolescents in Oman

To the Editor,

We write in response to the above mentioned article which appeared in the March 2008 issue of SQUMJ.¹ The incidence of this emerging trend of waterpipe use is increasing at an alarming rate.² Concerted efforts need to be made to actively alert young people in Oman to the potential hazards of this form of drug abuse. The importance of this should not be underestimated, as the waterpipe could easily become a means of not only tobacco consumption, but also other inhaled drugs of abuse.

At SQU College of Medicine, we have conducted a similar study using an anonymous questionnaire which was distributed to young Omanis in different regions of Oman. The main difference in our study was that our target group was young Omanis, age range 16-26 years as compared to school going adolescents in the above study. Participants were SQU students, medical students and other young people from elsewhere in Oman and the total number was 1,000. Overall, our study showed a lower prevalence of sheesha smoking in young people compared to other studies.³

We fully endorse the comments of the authors of the above study regarding introduction of comprehensive tobacco control legislation in Oman. Can we not campaign to increase awareness of the dangers of sheesha use among the youth of Oman?

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