

SMOKING IN THE WORKPLACE WITHIN A WOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIAL COLLECTIVITY IN THE COUNTY OF BIHOR.

PERCEPTIONS AND REGULATIONS

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Abstract: Social marketing formative research within a programme of Workplace Health Promotion has assessed and described perceptions, habits and practices of smokers in the workplace, within the context of the smoking ban regulations, so as to draw up intervention programmes in order to change the unhealthy habits. The associated exposure to professional irritants (ashes, gases, vapours) and tobacco triggers a synergic action, potentiating their effects on the respiratory system. The quantitative study has made use of a questionnaire applied to a sample group of 215 individuals working in a wood processing company in the county of Bihor, between January-February 2008. The statistical analysis was performed with the S.P.S.S. 15.0 programme pack. The study has revealed an increased prevalence of the habit of smoking in the workplace during working hours, especially in the “specially designated” places; although the general perception of both smokers and non-smokers related to those who smoke is that most of them do not smoke.

Keywords: smoking, workplace, smoking in the workplace

Rezumat: Cercetarea formativă de marketing social dintr-un program de Promovarea Sănătății la Locul de Muncă a evaluat și a descris: percepțiile, obiceiurile și practicile fumătorilor la locul de muncă, în contextul reglementărilor de interdicție a fumatului; în vederea elaborării programului de intervenție pentru schimbarea comportamentelor nesănătoase. Expunerea asociată la iritanții profesionali (pulberi, gaze, vapori) și tutun determină o acțiune sinergică, potențând efectele asupra aparatului respirator. Studiul cantitativ a utilizat un chestionar ce s-a aplicat pe un eșantion de 215 respondenți la o întreprindere de prelucrarea lemnului din județul Bihor, în perioada ianuarie-februarie 2008. Analiza statistică s-a realizat cu pachetul de program S.P.S.S. 15.0. Studiul a relevat o prevalență crescută a obiceiului fumatului la locul de muncă în timpul programului, în special în locurile „special amenajate”; deși, percepția generală atât a fumătorilor cât și a nefumătorilor, raportată la cei care fumează, este aceea că cei mai mulți nu fumează.

Cuvinte cheie: fumat, locul de muncă, fumatul la locul de muncă.

INTRODUCTION

Social marketing formative research within a programme of Workplace Health Promotion aims at assessing the perceptions, habits and practices of smokers by describing and analyzing them, set against the smoking ban regulations, so as to draw up intervention programmes in order to change the unhealthy habits.(1,2) The associated exposure to professional irritants (ashes, gases, vapours) and tobacco triggers a synergic action, potentiating their effects on the respiratory system. The workplace health promotion measures led to an improvement of the situation.(3) Social marketing aims at changing the behaviour of certain groups, supplying the mechanism that encourages the acceptance of change and facilitates voluntary change for the satisfaction of needs and desires.(4)

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The quantitative study used a questionnaire applied to a representative sample group of 215 individuals (determined with the Taro Yamane formula) working in a wood processing company: S.C. “ELMOBEROM” S.A. Beiuș, the county of Bihor.(5,6) 25 subjects were pre-tested. The application of the questionnaire was a face-to-face interview with 7 interview operators. The interviews took place within the company and took up an average of 25-30 minutes for smokers and of approximately 20-25 minutes for non-smokers. The data collection time interval was January-February 2008. There was a high answer rate, with no refusals. The statistical analysis was performed with the S.P.S.S. 15.0 programme pack.(7,8)

RESULTS

The data collected were centralized and processed and revealed the quantitative analysis of the habit of smoking in the workplace.

Within the company, 96% of the men and 79% of the women smoked within the past month, and the differences noted were not significant from the statistical point of view ($p = 0,25$, $df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 5,04$).

The structure of the smokers group depending on the place of smoking within the company is the following: 69,8% (44 subjects) smoking within the company declare

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that they do this "in a specially designated place"; 19,1% (12 subjects) smoke "in the yard"; 9,5% (6 subjects) of the smokers admit smoking in the bathroom and 1,6% (1 subject) smoke in other places (not mentioned). (Picture no. 2).

Picture no. 1. The structure of the smokers group depending on the habit of smoking in the company.

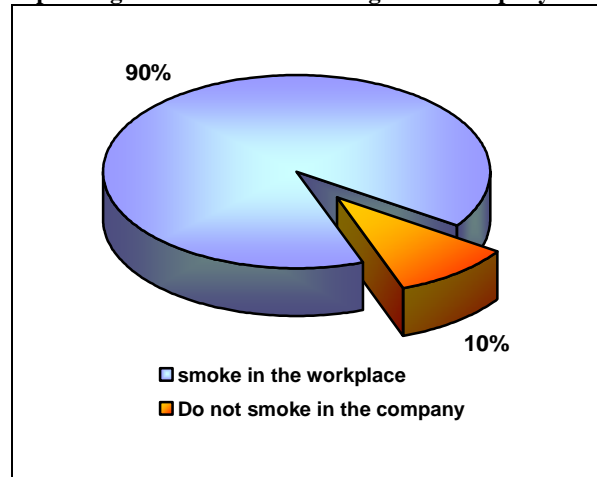


Table no. 1. The structure of the smokers group depending on sex and habit of smoking in the workplace, within the past month.

The habit of smoking in the workplace	Sex					
	Male		Female		Total	
	ca	%	ca	%	ca	%
Smoke in the workplace	48	96	15	79	63	90
Do not smoke in the workplace	2	4	5	21	7	10
Total	50	100	20	100	70	100

Table no. 2. The structure of the smokers group depending on the level of education and on the habit of smoking in the workplace, within the past month

The habit of smoking in the workplace within the past month	Level of education											
	Gymnasium		Vocational school		High-school		Post high-school education		Academic education		Total	
	ca	%	ca	%	ca	%	ca	%	ca	%	ca	%
Smoke	3	100	31	94	26	86,6	1	100	2	66	63	90
Do not smoke	0	0	2	6	4	13,4	0	0	1	34	7	10
Total	3	100	33	100	30	100	1	100	3	100	70	100

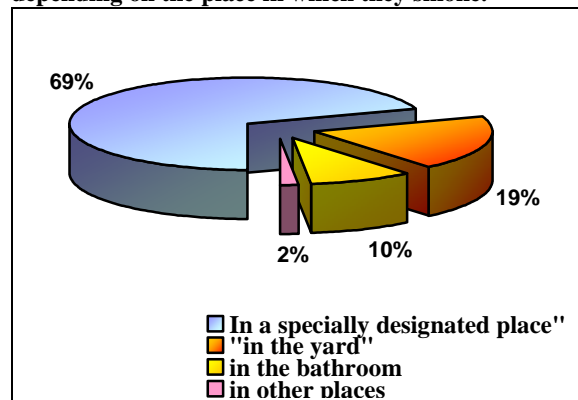
Table no. 3. The structure of the smokers group depending on age and on the habit of smoking in the workplace, within the past month.

The habit of smoking in the workplace within the past month	Age											
	Under 25		25-34		35-44		Over 44		Total			
	ca	%	ca	%	ca	%	ca	%	ca	%		
Smoke	10	100	11	78,5	30	90,9	12	92,3	63	90		
Do not smoke	0	0	3	21,5	3	9,1	1	7,7	7	10		
Total	10	100	14	100	33	100	13	100	70	100		

Table no. 4. The distribution of the smokers group depending on the number of cigarettes smoked during working hours.

Number of cigarettes smoked during working hours	Absolute frequency	Proportion %
1 – 2 cigarettes	15	23,8
3 – 5 cigarettes	32	50,8
6 – 9 cigarettes	12	19,0
10 – 19 cigarettes	2	3,2
20 – 39 cigarettes	2	3,2
40 cigarettes and more	0	0
Total	63	100

Picture no. 2. The structure of the smokers group depending on the place in which they smoke.



The analysis of the practice of smoking in the workplace is presented in the following tables.

Table no. 5. The structure of the smokers group and their behaviour towards a non-smoker.

What do you do if you want to smoke in the company when a non smoker is present?	Absolute frequency	Proportion %
I smoke only if it is a smoking place	31	49,2
I smoke under any circumstances	9	14,3
I ask for permission	9	14,3
I try to find out whether the person in question smokes and if they do not, then I do not smoke too	8	12,7
I do not smoke	5	7,9
No answer	0	0
I avoid smokers	1	1,6
Total	63	100

Table no. 6. The structure of the non-smokers group depending on the way in which they react when a colleague smokes in their presence.

Reaction of the non smokers	Number of persons	Proportion %
I do not mind	51	35,2
I leave	45	31,0
It bothers me	37	25,5
I ask them to smoke in the smoking place	10	6,9
I ask them to stub out the cigarette	2	1,4
Total	145	100

Table no. 7. The structure of the study group depending on the smokers' perception of the prevalence of smoking in the workplace.

The perception of the prevalence by the smokers	Number of persons	Proportion %
Nobody	2	2,9
Few	27	38,5
A few	25	35,7
Most people	15	21,5
Everybody	0	0
I do not know	1	1,4
No-answer	0	0
Total	70	100

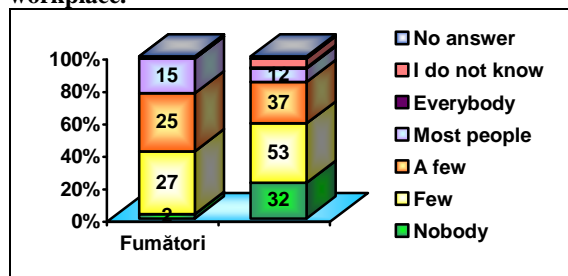
The behaviour of the colleagues does make some difference and a proof of it is the fact that 38.5% of the smokers and only 36.6% of the non-smokers consider the personnel to be made up of only few smokers, while 35.7% of the smokers and 25.5% of the non-smokers consider it to be made up of only a few

smokers (Figure nr.3).

Table no. 8. The structure of the study group depending on the non-smokers' perception of smoking in the workplace

The non-smokers' perception of the prevalence	Number of persons	Proportion %
Nobody	32	22,0
Few	53	36,6
A few	37	25,5
Most people	12	8,3
Everybody	1	0,7
I do not know	8	5,5
No-answer	2	1,4
Total	145	100

Picture no. 3. The structure of the sample group depending on the smokers' and non-smokers' perception of the prevalence of smoking in the workplace.



DISCUSSIONS

Smoking in the workplace ban has revealed the following: (9,10):

- After the legislation on smoking in the workplace was introduced in Finland in 1995, smoking occurrence has dropped from 29,6% to 25,0%; being significant both in the case of males and females. The number of cigarettes per day has dropped from 19 to 16 and air pollution in industrial and office workplaces has also decreased.
- A study carried out in 14 European countries suggests that smoking in the workplace ban might reduce the incidence of pulmonary cancers by 8% and the appearance of asthma or of chronic bronchitis by up to 30%.
- Approximately 7,5 million persons are exposed to passive smoking in the workplace in 14 countries of the EU and 24,6 million in the USA.
- An anti-smoking in the workplace legislation in Spain and Holland would allow for a decrease in pulmonary cancers and coronary diseases by 4% up to 9% and in obstructive chronic bronchopneumopathies, asthma and pneumonia by 8% up to 32%.
- Spain and Holland are the countries with the greatest number of adults exposed to passive smoking (32-54% and respectively 29-38%), while the smallest

numbers are found in the Northern countries that were among the first to adopt an anti-smoking legislation.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is a high prevalence of the habit of smoking in the workplace;
2. Out of the smokers interviewed, in the past month 91,3% also smoke in the workplace, 96% of which are men and 79% women;
3. During the working hours, 74,6% of the smokers smoke between 1-5 cigarettes per day;
4. Only 44.2% of the smokers smoke in a specially designated place;
5. As compared to those smoking in other "non-designated" places, the attitude of the non-smokers towards smokers varies: either they tolerate them (33,5%), or "sanction" them (66,5%) by drawing their attention and eventually leaving them;
6. The practice of smoking in the workplace is perceived as being rather low; more than half of the smokers and non-smokers interviewed stating that most people do not smoke in the workplace.

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