

Smoking characteristics and Readiness-to-quit Status among smokers attending preoperative assessment clinic

—A prospective cohort study

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Abstract

Aim Perioperative smoking is associated with increased incidence of general postoperative morbidity and mortality. The perioperative period has also been recognized as an important “teachable moment” to motivate patients adopt health changing behaviors. In this study, we aim to determine the prevalence of smokers among elective surgical patients in an Asian tertiary hospital. We also investigated their smoking characteristics, previous quitting attempts, readiness-to-quit status as well as their knowledge of smoking-related postoperative complications.

Methodology We conducted a single-center prospective cohort study among all patients attended preoperative assessment clinic within 2 months period (Aug to Sep 2020) using a preoperative smoking questionnaire.

Result A total of 3362 patients participated in the study, among which 348 were current smokers (10.4%). More than half (64.4%) of the smokers had attempted to quit previously, with most (78%) having made more than 1 attempt. 49% of current smokers were in the precontemplation stage and 31% in the contemplation stage. Only 19.8% were in the preparation stage of quitting. 38.4% of patients recognized the importance of smoking cessation perioperatively and 28.1% were confident about quitting perioperatively. Less than 60% of smokers are aware of at least one type of smoking-related postoperative complications. Less than half of the patients have ever received advice on perioperative smoking cessation from the surgeons (45%).

Conclusion A good understanding of smokers’ smoking characteristics, barriers to quit and readiness-to-quit status is important in establishing a successful multidisciplinary perioperative smoking cessation program. More importantly, counselling should be matched to their stage-of-change as well as knowledge deficits in order to capture this precious “teachable moment” perioperatively.