

## Original Research

### The Awareness of COTPA ACT 2003 and its association with Prevalence of Tobacco Consumption in districts of Chhattisgarh- A Questionnaire based Analytical study

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#### ABSTRACT:

Tobacco consumption is the major cause of oral cancer worldwide, and is responsible for a myriad of problems. The alarming increase in the number of cases having tobacco associated issues, encouraged the government of India to issue certain rules and regulations regarding tobacco consumption to control this menace. Thus the Cigarette and other tobacco products act (COTPA Act) was put forth in 2003. This act stated a list of guidelines targeting methods to reduce the uncontrolled usage of tobacco, creating awareness about the associated health problems, and creating a hefty penalty for those who violate the act. However the awareness of COTPA act is still questionable. Strict implementation of this act is essential to control the increasing rate of tobacco related health problems and oral cancer. This is a questionnaire survey-based research study conducted in Community health care centers of rural districts of Chhattisgarh with The aim to find out about the awareness of COTPA act and its association with tobacco consumption prevalence.

**Keywords:** Tobacco, COTPA, smokeless, smoking, questionnaire, survey, prevalence

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#### INTRODUCTION

India is considered the global capital of tobacco. Tobacco is considered as the leading cause of premature, though preventable deaths worldwide. India has an amalgamation of various cultures, beliefs and taboos thus the consumption of tobacco occurs in various forms ranging from smoking tobacco - beedi, cigarettes to smokeless tobacco products - gutka, zarda, paansupari etc.<sup>[1]</sup>

Tobacco is the major predisposing factor for carcinomas. Thus, the government came up with various laws and legislations to control the consumption of tobacco. The Government of India enacted in 2003 with its comprehensive tobacco control law the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products Act 2003 (COTPA 2003) which stated the prohibition of advertisement and regulation of trade and commerce, production, supply and distribution to reduce tobacco use.<sup>[2, 3]</sup> This Act includes: a) Section

4, prohibition of smoking in public places; b) Section 5, prohibition of advertisement of cigarettes and other tobacco products; c) Section 6, prohibition of sale of cigarettes or other tobacco products to anyone below the age of 18 years and in a particular area; and d) Section 7, prohibition on trade and commerce in production, supply, and distribution of cigarettes and other tobacco products. This act came into effect since 1st may 2004. Strict implementation of COTPA act is needed among the youth to decrease the prevalence of tobacco consumption. However the information and awareness of COTPA act among the population is essential for its effective implementation.<sup>[4]</sup> The aim of our study is analyse the awareness of COTPA act and its association with tobacco consumption prevalence.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study was a cross-sectional community-based design conducted for a span of 6 months from July 2019 to January 2020 in 8-9 community healthcare centers in Chhattisgarh. A dental camp was conducted for Oral Health checkups with a questionnaire survey form made to be filled for the type and prevalence of Tobacco Consumption among the resident population. A total of 200 candidates were included in the study. The inclusion criteria were the general population above the age of 18 years who had tobacco consumption as a habit with diversifying frequency. Exclusion criteria were pregnant women, disabled and

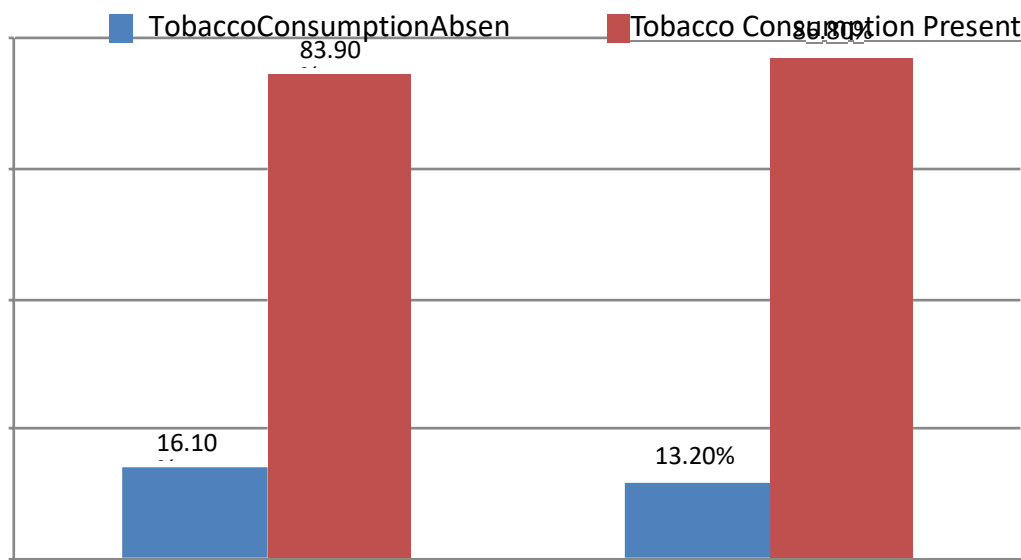
handicapped population, the population having medical concerns, people above the age of 80 years, and those who were not willing to participate in the study. The sample size was large enough to provide

**RESULTS**

In our study population males and females - Among the subjects with and without the knowledge of COPTA, there was no significant difference in usage of prevalence of Tobacco consumption (p=0.886) signifying that COPTA knowledge does not influence the use of tobacco.

**Table: Table showing the correlation between tobacco consumption and awareness of COTPA act.**

| COPTA | Tobacco Consumption Absent | Tobacco Consumption Present | ChSq  | P value |
|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|---------|
| No    | 20<br>16.1%                | 104<br>83.9%                | 0.326 | 0.885   |
| Yes   | 10<br>13.2%                | 66<br>86.8%                 |       |         |



**GRAPH SHOWING THE TOBACCO CONSUMPTION AND ITS PREVALENCE**

Out of our study subjects 62% of the population was unaware of the existence of COTPA act and 38% of the population was aware of it . Among the people who were unaware of the COTPA act 83.9% population consumed tobacco and 16.1% did not consume tobacco. Among the population who were aware of the COTPA act 86.8% population consumed tobacco and 13.2% did not.

Con8su6.m80p%tion Present 16.10% 13.20% intended.<sup>[5]</sup> Our study revealed that 62% of study population was not aware about this act Saw, thus indicating the need for more awareness programmes and strict implementation ofCOTPA act . However even among the people who were aware of this act , 86.8% of ourstudy population continued the consumption of tobacco unmindful of the repercussions , thus highlighting the fact that the COTPA act was being violated by the people and strict implementation methods to be followed . India is one the first few nations to give a formal consent to FCTC- WHO framework convention on tobacco control.<sup>[6]</sup> This was developed in response to globalisation of tobacco epidemic , thus highlighting the seriousness of this menace . It supplies a comprehensive direction for tobacco control at all levels covering more than 87.8 % of the world's

**DISCUSSION**

Tobacco consumption contributes to 5 million deaths per years and this figure is expected to rise to 10 million by 2025, according to a report by WHO .Tobacco is the only legally available consumer product which kills people when it is used entirely as Tobacco Consumption Absent 83.90% Tobacco

population in 168 signing nations( Shibuya et al 2003).<sup>[6,7]</sup> The government of India came up with the COTPA - The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products . GUIDELINES OF COTPA ACT ( 2003)- The Act prohibits smoking of tobacco in public places, except in special smoking zones in hotels, restaurants and airports and open spaces. Places where smoking is restricted include auditoriums, movie theatres, hospitals, public transport, school's , restaurants, hotels, amusement centres, offices (government and private), libraries, courts, post offices, markets, shopping malls, canteens, refreshment rooms, banquet halls.Smoking is allowed on roads, inside one's home or vehicle. Its salient features were prohibition of advertisement and regulation of trade and commerce, production , supply , distribution . As per this act it is illegal for tobacco advertisements to be placed , Smoking in public places is banned and the defaulters will be fined and Prohibition of sale of tobacco products to children below 18 years and within 100 yards of educational institutions .Advertisement of tobacco products including cigarettes is prohibited.<sup>[7]</sup> No person shall participate in advertisement of tobacco product, or allow a medium of publication to be used for advertisement of tobacco products. The COTPA act even states the minimum age limit - 18 years .Tobacco products cannot be sold to person below the age of 18 years and in places within 100 yards radius from the outer boundary of an institution of education, The act even states that tobacco products must be sold, supplied or distributed in a package which shall contain an appropriate pictorial warning, its nicotine and tar contents.Cigarette packets are required to carry pictorial warnings of a skull or scorpion or certain prescribed pictorial warnings along with the slogan SMOKING KILLS and TOBACCO CAUSES MOUTH CANCER.<sup>[8]</sup> This act even includes a penalty for the violators- It gives power to any police officer, or any officer of State Food or Drug Administration or any other officer, holding the equivalent rank being not below the rank of Sub-Inspector of Police for search and seizure of premises where tobacco products are produced, stored or sold, if he suspects that the provision of the Act has been violated. A fine up to Rs. 200 can be imposed for smoking in public place, selling tobacco products to minors, or selling tobacco products within a radius of 100 metres from any educational institution. A person who advertises tobacco products shall on first conviction shall be punished with up to 2 years in imprisonment or with fine which can extend to Rs. 1000, in case of subsequent conviction shall be punished with up to 5 years in imprisonment or with fine which can extend to Rs. 5000 Due to lack of knowledge and awareness regarding the COTPA act it was ineffective in the initial years , in the later years its awareness increased . NTCP (National Tobacco Control Program) launched by Ministry of health and Family welfare was launched in 2007-08 with an objective to bring about greater awareness about the

harmful effects of tobacco use, tobacco free laws and to facilitate efficient implementation (MOHFW, 2012).<sup>[7,8]</sup> Our present study observations are higher as compared to those observed in the adult global tobacco survey ( GATS) . According to Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) phase two was conducted in India in 2016-17, which revealed that 19.0% of men, 2.0% of women and 10.7% (99.5 million) of all adults currently smoke tobacco. 29.6% of men, 12.8% of women and 21.4% (199.4 million) of all adults currently use smokeless tobacco. 42.4% of men, 14.2% of women and 28.6% (266.8 million) of all adults currently use tobacco (smoked and/or smokeless tobacco) (MOHFW, 2017). In India various forms of tobacco are consumed - with cigarette smoking being the most prevalent followed by beedhi smoking and the consumption of smokeless tobacco products - paan , gutka,zarda, betel nut chewing . These forms of smokeless tobacco are quite popular among the low socio economic status groups and they are highly addictive. Tobacco addiction is one of the most widespread addiction in the world. The various hazardous affects of tobacco include the premalignant conditions - OSMF ,leukoplakia, erythroplakia , tobacco pouch keratosis and many more lesions - all of these have a potential for malignant transformation to squamous cell carcinoma . Various other cancers associated with tobacco smoke are lung cancer, stomach , pancreatic cancer . It has cardiovascular side effects and may even lead to infertility . Awareness about all these life threatening effects of tobacco has increased over time owing to the widespread campaigns in media, but they are not sufficient to curb the consumption of tobacco . Thus the awareness and implementation of COTPA Act is essential to curb the menace.

## CONCLUSION

Tobacco abuse is a major public health problem and includes secondhand smoke exposure. Continued efforts to control and eliminate this abuse are a medical necessity. A coordinated effort from all stakeholders, especially from the police, educational institutions, and the community, is required to improve this situation. There is a need for creating greater public awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco so that there is more voluntary compliance with the regulations. This analytical study reveals that the population is unaware of the COTPA 2003 and due to this many of the sections are violated. Strong support from the governing authorities is required to spread mass public awareness.

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