

## INTERSECTIONALITY OF TOBACCO USE WITH ALCOHOL, POVERTY, AND AGE IN LAO PDR

### Abstract:

Significance. Globally, tobacco and alcohol abuse are the most highly prevalent addictive behaviors and rank in the top ten addictive substances. In the Western Pacific Region, there is emerging data that cigarette smoking and alcohol use is a "polydrug" behavior among young men, and their initiation is occurring at about the same age. Such trends raise the possibility of targeting risk factors in prevention programs at the community and individual levels. We considered the association between alcohol and tobacco in the first nationally representative tobacco survey of Lao People's Democratic Republic. Methods. Lao PDR's National Adult Tobacco Survey (NATSL) was the first nationally representative prevalence survey of adult tobacco use in Lao PDR. It was completed in 2013 by the Lao Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Health (CIEH Office), and Loma Linda University under funding from Fogarty International Center of the US NIH. NATSL investigators conducted a stratified, multi-stage cluster sampling that selected 9,706 subjects from 2,822 households located in all 17 provinces and used the 2010 census as the sampling frame. The tobacco items were adapted from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey format and administered to all adults ages 15 years and older. Results. Alcohol was measured in the number of drinks over a 7-day interval as beer, wine, liquor, and palm liquor made at home for some rural subjects. Alcohol abuse (> 14 drinks per week) was evident in 8.9% (95% CI 8.4% to 9.5%) of adults, and primarily due to beer consumption at this level (6.1% [95% CI 5.6% to 6.5%]). We found alcohol abuse (> 14 drinks per week) was strongly associated with current daily cigarette smoking (OR = 2.26 [95% CI 1.89 to 2.713]) among all adults, and a significant 4% increase in odds of being a smoker per drink consumed each week (OR= 1.04 [95% CI 1.03 to 1.05]). Conclusion. Smoking and alcohol use are strongly associated in a national sample of adults in Lao PDR, and the finding raises the possibility of targeting both risk factors in culturally tailored interventions.

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