

The smoking endemy in Brazil

Endemia do tabagismo no Brasil

Vitorino Modesto dos Santos¹

DOI: 10.5935/2238-3182.20150089

ABSTRACT

Comments on the article Rabahi and Alcântara, entitled “Temporal trends in the smoking endemy in Brazil,” in which the authors analyzed the role of this serious public health problem in morbidity and mortality from respiratory, cardiovascular, and neoplastic diseases.

Key words: Tobacco; Smoking; Control.

RESUMO

Comentários sobre o artigo de Rabahi e Alcântara, sob o título “Tendência temporal da endemia do tabagismo no Brasil”, no qual os autores analisaram o papel desse grave problema de saúde pública na morbimortalidade por doenças respiratórias, cardiovasculares e neoplásicas.

Palavras-chave: Tabaco; Hábito de Fumar; Controle.

Dear Editor,

I read with great interest the article by Rabahi and Alcântara entitled “Temporal trends in the smoking endemic in Brazil” in which the authors analyzed the role of this serious public health problem in morbidity and mortality resulting from respiratory, cardiovascular, and neoplastic diseases.¹ Although there has been a reduction in the prevalence of smoking in 2013 compared with 2012, the comments emphasized the high prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (DPOC) in our country in addition to the high cost that this condition has represented to public coffers.¹ Considering that only 3% of smokers who have tried to quit this habit were successful, the authors concluded that it is necessary to improve strategies toward this goal.¹ Furthermore, they drew attention to the importance of conducting more studies comparing the temporal trends in the smoking endemy in developing countries.¹

In this point of view, the full reading of the manuscript commented here provides valuable information for professionals in various specialties including pulmonologists. In fact, smoking is an ever current theme, very important and complex, involving socioeconomic, political, and public health factors that hinder the success of controlling measures.² Some aspects of the tobacco industry in Brazil were published in 1979,² and the temporal variation in some of the old parameters could have a significant reflection in the current context. In our commercial bal-

Submitted: 2015/08/12
Approved: 2015/08/25

Institution:
Armed Forces Hospital. Department of Internal Medicine
Brasília, DF – Brazil

Corresponding Author:
Vitorino Modesto dos Santos
E-mail: vitorinomodesto@gmail.com

ance, tobacco represented a component of the first magnitude providing jobs in plantations and cultivation, transportation, industry, distribution, and commerce.² Domestic producers held unremitting efforts in order to increase the production of tobacco leaves and cigarettes and increase its international market share. In 1978, a 10% increase in sales of cigarettes and 14% in the production of tobacco leaves were observed.² At the time, the tax burden was very high. Taxes involved about 70% of the selling price of products sold, 11% was the retailer's profit and 19% of the producer's.² The price of cigarettes and the retailer's profit margin were established by a Ministerial Decree. Among the 23 industrial sub-sectors of IPI collection, the item "tobacco products" accounted for 36.33%, constituting the largest share of this source

of tax revenue for the government.² In adverse economic situations, the "political will" supporting effective and efficient government programs to tackle the challenges related to smoking in our country may be lacking. In reviewing the set of obstacles for this epidemic's control,² I believe that DPOC associated with smoking will represent, in fact, the third overall cause of mortality in the next 15 years.¹

REFERENCES

1. Rabahi MF; Alcântara EC. Tendência temporal da endemia do tabagismo no Brasil. *Rev Med Minas Gerais*. 2015; 25(1):140-2.
2. Santos VM. Aspectos da indústria do tabaco no Brasil. *J Bras Pneumol*. 1979; 5(4):149-52.