

The Role of Parents to Prevent Early Adolescents Smoking Behavior: A Qualitative Study on Adolescents in Tegal City, Indonesia

Agus Susanto^{1,2*}, Hartono Hartono³, Ismi Dwi Astuti Nurhaeni⁴, Drajat Tri Kartono⁴

¹Doctoral Program in Community Development, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

²Politeknik Harapan Bersama, Tegal, Indonesia

³Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta Indonesia

⁴Political and Social Science Faculty, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: Agus Susanto

Email: agussus@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Early adolescent smoking behavior is undeniably related to parental smoking habits. Directly or indirectly, parents have a significant in smoking. Therefore, an active role of parents is needed to help their children avoiding smoking habits. This research aims to explore the efforts of parents to prevent their children from smoking.

Methods: It is qualitative research. Research data were obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews with parents and teenage boys who were still junior high school students. Interviews with informants were carried out separately at different times. In addition to interviews, we also conducted field observations to obtain comprehensive data.

Results: This study found that the role of parents in preventing children's smoking behavior varies. These are summarized in the following significant activities: making rules at home, nurturing and educating children, being a role model for children, and disciplining children who violate smoking regulations.

Conclusion: The study found that parents have a significant role in preventing their children from smoking.

Keywords: early teens, tobacco, the role of parents, prevention of smoking behavior

Correspondence:

Agus Susanto

¹Doctoral Program in Community Development, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

Email: agussus@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

Smoking is a behavior detrimental to health and can even affect death [1,2]. However, this conduct has increased from year to year. Smoking in the world is very prevalent. Around 22.5 percent of adults worldwide (a billion people) smoke tobacco products [3]. The proposition of the number of smokers is 32.0 percent are male, and 7.0 percent are female. Approximately 11 percent of deaths in men and 6 percent of deaths in women each year are caused by tobacco [4].

Most smokers come from developing countries like Indonesia. Indonesia is a country with the highest prevalence of smokers in the Southeast Asia region. Around 61.4 million people in Indonesia are tobacco smokers [5,6]. Ironically, smoking behavior in Indonesia starts at a very young age. 43.2 percent of Indonesian young people consume cigarettes when they are 12 to 13 years old [7].

Many factors affect the high prevalence of teenage smoking. Parents and peers' role is the two most significant influences in the creation of early adolescent smoking activity [8,9,10]. Parents who smoke tend to influence the child's smoking behavior [11,12,13]. This behavior seemed to be an affirmation of the child's smoking behavior. Parents are the first model of children's behavior because they grew up with their parents. Consciously or not, parents' actions influence teen smoking behavior. Non-smoking parents indirectly may reduce the incidence of smoking in their children. This situation is very alarming, and action must take immediate action. If there are no precautions, it can affect the health, social, and psychological of adolescents [14,15,16]

Many studies have been undertaken to discuss smoking habits among adolescents. Many studies emphasize the issue of stopping smoking by offering care, awareness, and others [17]. Compared to previous research, this study focuses on exploring parents' role in preventing adolescents from smoking. This study focuses on parents' role, as parents are the significant party to influencing this behavior. Parents are the first persons to seen and become role models for children.

Methods

Ethical Approval

Approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee Health Research of Sebelas Maret University Surakarta, Indonesia (registration number 344 / UNS27.06 / KEPK / EC / 2019). The research activity was approved by the Tegal City government, especially the Head of the Regional Development, Research and Development Planning Office, the Head of the Education Office, and the Head of the Health Office.

The research was conducted in line with the local regulations. Before the data collection is done, the researcher asked all informants to participate in signing informed consent as approval to follow the study. They were also allowed to withdraw at any time from the activity. Researchers also guarantee confidentiality and anonymity in the process of data publication.

Research Design and Sampling Procedures

It is a qualitative study in Tegal City, Central Java, Indonesia. We chose Tegal City as a research place because this city has a high prevalence of teenage smokers. Many early teens have been exposed to cigarettes, and even

some of them have tried smoking [18]. We conducted it from October to November 2019.

Criteria for informants are parents of male middle school students and male students' junior high schools. Teenage informants were taken from nine state junior high schools in Tegal City. The selection was based on the consideration of ease of access and location of the school. We did not specify the number of informants at the beginning of the study, but the informants' selection followed information from informants who completed interviews (snowball sampling). Until the end of the study, 37 informants were divided into two parents and 35 teenagers.

Data Collection

The collection of research data is carried out through in-depth semi-structured observations. In-depth interviews were done by A.S (first author). Interviews with parents' informants were conducted following the agreement. Interviews with adolescent informants were held in the counseling teacher's guidance room with approval. The researcher worked closely with the counseling guidance teacher who understands the situation of the student. Researchers also collaborated with informants interviewed to obtain additional informants.

Interviews were based on interview guidelines. It was prepared based on previous studies and approval of the university commissions [19,20]. Interview guides for parents and teenagers were made separately with different questions. Each informant was interviewed for 20-30 minutes separately and at different times.

Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded in MP3 format and then written in the transcript. These were read repeatedly and given a code to get a particular theme. After that, these were selected and arranged according to the research objectives and added supporting interview transcripts. Finally, we presented the data in narrative form.

Results

Based on field research, parents' role to prevent children from smoking is spread in various forms. However, these various efforts are then summarized in four principal activities. The fourth activity includes efforts to make regulations at home, building relationships, educating about health, being a role model for children, and giving discipline to children who break the rules. The following description of parental roles.

Arrange Rules at Home

The regulations set by parents are not always directly related to smoking. The rules of parents tend to be verbal and informal. The rules given to their children are, first of all, the problem of playmates. They suggested people who can be suitable as friends. Parents tend to forbid their children to make friends with teens exposed to cigarettes. It is consistent with arguments from the following sources: I just gave a message to avoid friends who are having a destructive influence. Parent 1

My parent has not allowed me to interact with children who drop out of school. Teen 30

They (parents) told me to be friends with the intelligent and diligent. Teen 31

The next rule is related to playing hours. Most parents assume the early teen smoking activities usually

associated with outdoor activities at night. Therefore parents give a rule of time when their children can hang out outside. In the following transcript, several informants said:

My parents imposed a curfew. I have to be home at 9-10 night. Teen 19

My father asked me to go home, not late, when playing with friends at night. Teen 26

Parental rules forbid children from smoking when they are in childhood and are still in parental care. Several informants revealed:

I forbid my child to smoke because he is still a child. When they were still under my supervision, I did not allow them to smoke. Parent 2

My parents do not allow me to smoke because I still a child. Teen 20

Parents not only convey the contents of the rules to their children. Sometimes parents also inform some sanctions to their children if they break the rules about smoking. To clarify, we can pay attention to the informants' comments in the following transcript:

My father threatened me, he would not give me pocket money if I smoke. Teen 13

My parent once told me that He would report to a school if I smoke again. Teen 16

My father once told me that he would report to school if I smoke. Teen 22

Building Relationships and Health Education

Parents should give health education to children. Besides, parents also need to build harmonious relationships with children to provide such education. This activity serves to build the closeness of parents with children. The activity of establishing communication with the child is described in the following interview passage :

I ask my child to chat casually in his spare time. We chat various things; sometimes, I advise on it. Parent 2

My mother often chatted with me at night. She asked me about many things. Teen 2

My family used to gather at night, we talk anymore before going to sleep. Teen 6

My parents used to ask the family for a picnic during the holidays. Teen 19

The activity of providing health education, especially regarding smoking to children, is carried out as about the dangers of smoking to health. This activity was revealed in the following informants' answers :

I explained cigarettes and the danger to my child, especially if there had guests who smoked. I provide advice and an explanation of the health effects of smoking. Parent 2

My mother and sister often explain to me that smoking is not suitable for health. Teen 28

Be an Example to Children

Parents are not enough only to educate their children to prevent them from do not smoke. Parents also serve as role models for their children related to smoking. The example of parents related to smoking is they do not smoke. Several informants revealed this in the following interview excerpt:

I do not smoke. Parent 1

My husband never smokes. We never smoke at home. Parent 2

My father used to smoke before marriage, but after he married, he did not smoke anymore. Teen 23

For parents who smoke, it was not easy to set an example. However, parents can limit smoking behavior when at home. Parents try not to smoke near their family members, especially children. It was revealed in the following interview transcript:

My parents smoke in quiet places. Teen 26

Another example given by parents is, do not smoke when together with children.

My father smokes if outside the house, but when at home, do not smoke. Teen 28

Discipline Children

The last parent's action in preventing the child's smoking behavior is to give discipline to the violation. Disciplinary action occurs in moderate to extreme. The most reasonable measure is advising to children who smoke. We know this action in the following findings:

I did not give sanctions; at least I about the dangers of smoking to health. I also go to school so that the school provides supervision and action to my kid. Parent 2

I was scolded and admonished when they found out that they cannot smoke because it can cause illness; if I grow up, I can smoke. Teen 5

My parents, especially my mother motivated and explain to me the effect of smoking on health. They did not allow me to smoke even though I was an adult. Teen 10

Other disciplinary actions are withholding the child's rights, such as not giving an allowance.

My allowance is reduced. Teen 11

I was not given pocket money. Teen 13

I cannot ask for an allowance. Teen 19

Disciplinary actions of parents are sometimes extreme such as giving physical beat like hitting. The following informants revealed this:

They are angry and told me to smoke one pack at a time. Teen 6

My father once asked me to do push-ups. Teen 12

My father once hit when I was in 6th grade. At that time, he caught me smoking. Teen 23

I was not given pocket money and beaten by my father. Teen 26

Besides physical punishment, there are parents who threaten their children to leave home. The following sources have discussed this:

My parents told me to stay with my sister outside the city because I was smoking. Teen 27

I will be expelled from home. Teen 28

Discussion

Parents have a very significant role in the development of child smoking activity in early adolescents [21]. Their children are still very dependent on their parents in this age group. Parents are a guide and a model in the development of conduct in children and young adolescents. Several studies have shown that their children imitate the conduct of smoking parents [9,22]. As a result, early adolescent parents have an immense ability to discourage their children from smoking. Parents are not expected to be late in the role of prevention. The higher the child's age, the lower the child's reliance on parents.

The study findings indicate that parents have a primary impact on the behavior of children. Since their children born until puberty, parents have a responsibility to care

for and to educate them. [23]. In Asia, including culture in Indonesia, parents may still control their children even though they have entered puberty. Even when they already have got married, sometimes parents still intervene in their children's families. It shows that the role of parents is essential for their children [24].

The first thing that is needed to discourage smoking is that parents need to make smoke-free rules. These Rules have a significant role to play in instilling children's non-smoking attitudes. Such rules will help children and young stay away from smoking. The application of parental rules must be consistent and ongoing. Parents need to warn their children regularly to form a child's anti-smoking attitude.

During the development phase of children, parents must start educating them about smoking and it would affect their health. Children who have reached their teens need a simple, reasonable understanding of why they should not smoke. At this point, parents need to provide in-depth education on smoking activity and its effect on health.

The success of this activity requires comprehensive parental knowledge about cigarettes. Parent need to update continually their knowledge about smoking to provide an appropriate education for their children. Parents' knowledge about smoking influences the formation of their children's behavior [25,8]. Parents can use various communication channels such as telephone, film, and interpersonal communication to educate their children about smoking behavior. Besides, parents also need to assist their children to prevent smoking behavior [12]. Parents should not be superior in this activity, but they should act as friends so that children are more open to talking [26].

When there is a break of the rules about smoking, parents must dare to discipline the child. Discipline has a deterrent effect on children if done correctly. Unfortunately, the findings of this study show that most discipline of parents does not aim at educating. Sanctions tend to vent the anger of parents and not evaluate the mistakes of children. This discipline should be to educate children. Excellent discipline is accompanied by advice and guidance [27]. It would strengthen the attitude and intention to not smoke. This study supports previous research that parents have a crucial role in influencing children's actions during the transition to the teenage period. Parents are a model for children in shaping behavior during childhood. Parents' behavior tends to be imitated by children. When children enter their teens, they will slowly shape their behavior. However, if parents provide an excellent education to children during growth would provide a foundation and limits in the formation of behavior, including the problem of smoking in early adolescence. Parents' failure does educate and guiding children early on impacts children's confusion in the formation of smoking behavior. Parents' role in providing education and role models provides a firm foundation for children to avoid smoking when entering their teens.

This study has limitations because it only focuses on the role of parents. The formation of early adolescent smoking behavior is very complicated. Therefore, further studies need to explore other factors beyond the role of parents to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

Conclusion

The findings of the study conducted in Tegal City show that parents have an essential role in preventing their children from smoking. This research contributes to encouraging parents' awareness of the importance of their role. They should be actively and sustainably involved in this activity. Parents also need to update their knowledge about smoking. It would impact an effort to provide health education. Parents must teach them early. They should not wait for their children to ask about cigarettes or even try smoking. Health education about smoking from an early age will help children understand about smoking. It would so provide them a firm basis to avoid cigarettes when they enter the adolescence phase.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interest.

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