

## **Attitude Regarding Smoking among Youth in Kurundankulama**

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Smoking is a major health concern throughout the world today. It is also known as a major health killer. Therefore, much effort is put into addressing this issue in order to prevent deaths and diseases that occur due to smoking. Active as well as passive smoking affect human life. It causes illnesses such as cancer, heart attacks and leads to premature death. In Sri Lanka, much effort is put in by the government, non governmental organizations, private sector and by different community groups to prevent smoking. Smoking is an acquired behavior which later develops into a habit. Attitudes of a person are very important in acquiring this behavior.

This research was conducted in Kurundankulama PHM area which is located in Mihintale MOH division in mid February 2008. A cross-sectional study was carried out as a pre-evaluation using a structured questionnaire among a total of 46 participants aged between 10 to 15 years regarding their attitude as to why people smoke. The results obtained during the survey indicate that 76.08% of the respondents believe that people smoke due to grief, 47.80 % indicated that people smoke for happiness, 34.78 % believe that people smoke to gain favor, and 15.23% of the respondents think that people smoke due to problems in their lives. Only 2.17% of the respondents believe that people smoke due to their own foolishness.

These findings emphasize that the program planners need to pay attention to the attitude of youth on smoking when planning activities to prevent tobacco consumption, since attitudes of people towards smoking can influence their behavior.