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| **Title of Research Presentation** The case for equity in tobacco cessation: the role of culture and environment in smoking cessation among the Arab community in Israel |
| **Maximum 2500 characters (including spaces but excluding title)****Background/Objectives**Among the social determinants of tobacco use, culture plays an important part. The prevalence of tobacco use among the Israel Arab community (38.2% - mainly males) is higher than in the general population (23.3%). The main study objective: to identify the enabling factors and barriers to smoking cessation among the Israeli Arab adult population for effective program planning and implementation. **Methods**A two-stage study was conducted: 1. Focus groups in 4 Arab communities to learn of the significance of the issue and to develop the research tool for the second phase; 2. A cross-sectional telephone survey among a random sample of 306 current and previous smokers, members of Clalit, the largest national health care organization in Israel. Half of the sample recently participated in smoking cessation programs. Data were gathered regarding: smoking status and quitting attempts, attitudes towards smoking, suggestions for appropriate action for prevention and cessation, and personal characteristics (gender, age, residence, SES). **Results**Older smokers (>35 yrs) and those residing in cities with mixed populations, as compared to Arab towns, quit smoking at a higher rate (p<.05). No other personal characteristics were associated with cessation. Participation in cessation programs was associated with higher rates of cessation maintenance, than attempting to quit alone (p<.05). Health concerns, including the health of those in the smoker’s close proximity, were the leading factor for quitting; the family physician was acknowledged as the most important influence in the decision to quit. Recommendations for improved health promotion practice include: 1. separate cessation programs for each gender, and 2. increase in school-based programs for preventing smoking in youth. **Discussion**Social environmental and cultural factors are critical in promoting smoking cessation. More effort needs to be invested in enforcing smoke-free policies in Arab towns, and more systematic interventions stressing the risk of second-hand smoke exposure are necessary. Community health care teams need to be more active in promoting smoking cessation. More in-depth research is warranted to understand the needs of female Arab smokers, including removing stigma to enable participation in cessation programs. The conclusions will be integrated in the 2019 health promotion workplan for the national healthcare organization. **Keywords** smoking cessation, cultural appropriateness, equity |