

A PILOT STUDY OF BETEL CHEWING PREVENTION (I) — THE STATUS AND FACTORS RELATED TO BETEL CHEWING AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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This study was designed to examine the prevalence and characteristics of betel chewing among adolescents. Educational intervention was implemented at four junior high schools: two in the central area and two in a suburban area. We selected as subjects a sample of 281 male students in the eighth grade. A set of questionnaires was employed for data collection. Major results are as follows: (1) 25.3% of the students had family members and 11.4% had friends who chew betel-nut; (2) 15.7% of the students had never tried betel-nut; (3) 71.2% of the students had betel-nut booths near their homes and 43.4%, near their schools; (4) Most students tended to reject betel-nut chewing; (5) 18.5% of the students reported that they chew betel-nut; (6)

38.7% first tried betel-nut chewing during primary school and 16.3%, during junior high school; (7) Students who chew betel-nut have mothers with a low-level of education, have low self-acceptance, exhibit the trait of external control, have a positive attitude towards betel chewing, smoke, and have family members or friends who chew betel-nut. Based on these results, it was recommended that an educational program focusing on the prevention of betel chewing be initiated. Students with a low level of self-acceptance, the trait of external control or a smoking habit need to develop the ability to say "no" and to resist family and peer pressure to chew betel-nut. (*J Natl Public Health Assoc (ROC)*: 1992; **11**(4): 285-294)

Key words: *Betel chewing, prevention, adolescent*

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