



The prevalence, duration of exposure and predicting factors for snus use among young Finnish men

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Introduction

- Recent studies show an increased consumption of snus in Finland. The Swedish type of moist, low-nitrosamide smokeless tobacco (snus) is most popular in Scandinavia and North America.
- The level of tobacco exposure correlates with health-related problems, but little is known about the characteristics of snus use.

Purpose

- The prevalence, duration of use and the amount of daily usage of snus and cigarettes were investigated. The attitudes towards perceived harmfulness of snus, and the predictive factors affecting the total time of snus consumption were examined.

Methods

- A questionnaire-based survey was carried out in 2016 among military conscripts during their first week of service (n=1,278, mean age 19.5 ; response rate 54.4 %) in three out of seventeen garrisons of the Finnish Defence forces.
- The questionnaire consisted of 29 questions including basic information (age, gender, education), tobacco habits and attitudes towards perceived harmfulness of snus.

Results

- Almost a fifth (19.5%) of the conscripts reported daily snus use, and a quarter (16%) reported occasional use.
- Daily snus use was associated with an earlier starting age, longer duration of use, and higher daily exposure time compared with occasional use.
- On average, daily snus users consumed ten portions and occasional users three portions per day ($p < 0.001$).
- The daily total exposure time for daily users was 6.2h (372 minutes, 95% CI 344-401), and for occasional users 2.3h (139 minutes, 95% CI 106-171).
- Respondents with an upper secondary education had significantly less daily total exposure than those with basic comprehensive education ($p = 0.036$).
- Perceptions of snus as a harmful substance resulted in a significantly lower duration of exposure.

Conclusions:

- High snus exposure duration was associated with an earlier starting age, a longer history of use, and a careless attitude to its health hazards.
- Snus use was very common among young Finnish men.
- A higher education level was a protective factor for total exposure time.
- Studies of the long-term health effects and dependency profile of snus use are needed.

Table 1 Predictive factors for the daily total exposure time to snus

Predictive factor	Effect of daily total exposure time in minutes (hours)	95% CI in minutes	p-value
Duration of snus use	46 (0.8)	29 – 643	<0.001
Age of respondent	-25 (-0.4)	-47 – -3	0.026
Comprehensive school	0		
Vocational school	-36 (-0.6)	-155 – 84	0.556
Upper sec. education	-141 (-2.4)	-272 – -9	0.036
Never regularly smoked	0		
Daily smoker	-78 (-1.3)	-150 – -6	0.033
Occasional smoker	72 (1.2)	-1 – 145	0.054
Former smoker	45 (0.75)	-26 – 117	0.211
Snus perceived harmless	0		
Perceived neither as harmless nor harmful	-59 (-1.0)	-135 – 16	0.123
Perceived as very harmful	-85 (-1.4)	-159 – -11	0.025



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