

Global Tobacco Surveillance System

Tobacco questions for communicable disease outbreak investigations



Updated: 8 April 2020

Background

Tobacco use causes multiple chronic conditions, including chronic lung disease, cancer, diabetes and heart disease. Cigarette smoking can suppress the immune system and cause heart and lung diseases. A person who smokes tobacco products may be at greater risk for, and may have a harder time recovering from, respiratory illnesses, such as COVID-19.

Tobacco use questions can be integrated into epidemiological case investigations in order to gain a better understanding about persons at risk of contracting a disease or developing severe complications. The six survey questions listed below are taken from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS). These questions can be included in surveillance to help inform analyses of risk factors. It is recommended that Q1 and Q2 on the left column below are priority questions, while Q1-Q6 on the right column below can be used when space allows for collecting additional information related to tobacco use. In addition to these recommended six questions, countries may adapt additional country specific and or product specific questions regarding tobacco use.

Survey Questions

| Priority questions for inclusion in case reports or surveillance for infectious disease investigation | Questions for inclusion in case reports or surveillance for infectious disease investigation |
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| <p>Smoking tobacco refers to products where you burn the tobacco as you smoke it, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, waterpipe with tobacco. Electronic cigarettes are asked about separately.</p> <p>Q1. Do you currently smoke tobacco on a daily basis, less than daily, or not at all?</p> <p>DAILY 1 LESS THAN DAILY 2 NOT AT ALL 3</p> <p>Q2. Do you currently use electronic cigarettes or any other vaping device on a daily basis, less than daily, or not at all?</p> <p>DAILY 1 LESS THAN DAILY 2 NOT AT ALL 3</p> | <p>Smoking tobacco refers to products where you burn the tobacco as you smoke it., including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, waterpipe with tobacco. Electronic cigarettes are asked about separately.</p> <p>Q1. Do you currently smoke tobacco on a daily basis, less than daily, or not at all?</p> <p>DAILY 1 > GO TO Q3 LESS THAN DAILY 2 > GO TO Q3 NOT AT ALL 3</p> <p>Q2. In the past, have you smoked tobacco on a daily basis, less than daily, or not at all? INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT HAS DONE BOTH "DAILY" AND "LESS THAN DAILY" IN THE PAST, CHECK "DAILY"</p> <p>DAILY 1 > GO TO Q4 LESS THAN DAILY 2 > GO TO Q4 NOT AT ALL 3 > GO TO Q6</p> <p>Q3. On average, how many of the following products do you currently smoke each (day/week)? Also, let me know if you smoke the product, but not every (day/week). INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT REPORTS SMOKING THE PRODUCT BUT NOT EVERY (DAY/WEEK), ENTER 888. REPORT TOTAL NUMBER, NOT IN PACKS OR CARTONS. (ADJUST CATEGORIES AS NEEDED)</p> <p>a. Manufactured cigarettes? _____ PER DAY/WEEK b. Hand-rolled cigarettes? _____ PER DAY/WEEK c. Kreteks? _____ PER DAY/WEEK d. Pipes full of tobacco? _____ PER DAY/WEEK e. Cigars, cheroots, or cigarillos? _____ PER DAY/WEEK f. Number of water pipe sessions? _____ PER DAY/WEEK</p> <p>Q4. How old were you when you first tried smoking tobacco, even once? _____</p> <p>Q5. [ASK ONLY IF Q2=1 OR 2] How long has it been since you stopped smoking? [ONLY INTERESTED IN WHEN RESPONDENT STOPPED SMOKING REGULARLY – DO NOT INCLUDE RARE INSTANCES OF SMOKING] _____ YEARS / MONTHS / WEEKS / DAYS LESS THAN 1 DAY</p> <p>Q6. Do you currently use electronic cigarettes or any other vaping device on a daily basis, less than daily, or not at all?</p> <p>DAILY 1 LESS THAN DAILY 2 NOT AT ALL 3</p> |

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Indicators

- Q1: Current tobacco smokers (daily/less than daily)
- Q2: Former tobacco smokers (daily/less than daily)
- Q3: Current cigarette (or other smoking tobacco product) smokers
- Q3: Cigarettes (or other smoking tobacco product) smoked per day
- Q4: Age of tobacco smoking initiation
- Q4 and Q5: Duration of tobacco smoking
- Q6 (Q2): Current electronic cigarette users (daily/less than daily)

References

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- CDC. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. Published February 11, 2020. Accessed March 27, 2020

For additional information if you have questions regarding these questions, please contact GTSSInfo@cdc.gov.