

Preface

A Note from the Editor- in- Chief: The Smoking Pandemic

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Smoking among Jordanians has reached pandemic proportion. Studies done more than a decade ago did show that more than 58% of adult males and around 28% of adult females were cigarette smokers. Among university students. The same study showed that 53% of males and 14.4% of female students were smokers (Ann Saud Med 11:44-47, 1991). More recent studies at school students have shown alarming figures. The GYTS/2003 study among 6313 Jordanian students between the ages of 12-16 years has shown that 36.6% of males smoke some kind of a tobacco product; while 27.7% of female students did the same.

In my opinion these figures are so alarming that urgent measures are needed by the government, the educational institutions, the private sector and by the parliament to curb this trend or else the whole country will be totally immersed in this pandemic.

Previous world studies have shown that among smokers 73% have picked up smoking between the age of 13-17 years, 16% before the age of 12 and only 11% after the age of 18 years. This means that Jordan is well in the spiraling pandemic of cigarette smoking. It also means that intense and focused measures are needed to target young people between the ages of 12-18 years in any anti-smoking campaign. This is probably the best single measure one can take to reduce the size of the pool of new smokers.

When it comes to financial losses, the World Bank figures for 2002 showed that Jordanians have spent 500 million JD on smoking. The figures for 2006 are probably approaching JD 700 millions. It means that in average each Jordanian is spending around 160 us \$ per year on cigarettes.

As for the death related to smoking one cannot but wonder how humans are so pathetic to adhere to something that is killing them in millions. According to figures from WHO in 2000 smoking killed 4 million people. By the year 2030 it will kill in total 10 million people: 3 millions from developed and 7 from developing nations. From the year 1950 to 2000 smoking killed 70 million people. By the year 2025 the total number of people who will die because of smoking will be 220 millions and by 2050 it will be 520 million individuals. I am not aware of any disease or war or natural disaster which has killed so many people.

I am pleading to his majesty, to the government and to law makers to save the country from this alarming killer which is ending the life of so many people prematurely and in misery.

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