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ON SMOKING BEHAVIOR AMONG MALE SECONDARY SCHOOL
CHILDREN IN VIENTIANE MUNICIPALITY, LAO PDR. THESIS ADVISOR:
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The objectives of this cross-sectional study were to assess the smoking prevalence and the factors related to smoking behavior of 377 male students in four secondary schools in Vientiane Municipality. Data collection was done through self-administered questionnaires, which were answered anonymously by students.

The result of the study indicated that smoking prevalence among male secondary school students in Vientiane Municipality was 25.4% (including ex-smokers and current smokers) with the initiation age of 12.2 years.

The majority of students had fair knowledge on smoking hazards whereas only some of them possessed poor knowledge. The influencing factors showed that half of the students had family smoking and friend smoking at almost proportional distribution. More than half had teacher smoking. 70% of the cases were asked to purchase cigarettes for others and 37% were asked to light the cigarettes for others. Two third of the students who smoked were introduced to smoking by friends.

The major source of information was the mass media. More than half of the students also have seen cigarette advertisements on the television, in sport stadiums, and billboards which could encourage children to smoke. Most of students reported that cigarettes are easy to obtain, and cigarette dealers never refused to sell cigarettes to children. Nevertheless, students recognized that people have strong reaction against children smoking.

Smoking reduction among young people should be the ultimate objective, aimed at focusing on discouraging families and teachers from involving students in smoking in terms of accessibility, availability and development of children's smoking interest.