



Khat Chewing Habit among Lecturers of Dire Dawa University

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Abstract: Khat Chewing is the most important preventable cause of mental problems worldwide. Studies have shown that initiating khat chewing early in life is associated with increased risk for serious health outcomes. **Aim of the Study:** This study was conducted to estimate the prevalence of chewing khat among lecturers of Dire Dawa University in Dire Dawa City, to determine the ecological factors for the problem, and to show the instructors knowledge about chewing khat effects. **Subjects and Methods:** The study was cross sectional study. It was conducted in September 2021. The sample of study (n = 377) were included, with response rate = 80.01%. Data collected via personal interview and filling a questionnaire which was prepared after reviewing literature for similar studies. **RESULTS:** Males comprised (88.2%) of the respondent lecturers who chew khat with a highly significant difference (P < 0.001) between males and females as regards chewing khat. Year of teaching experience, teaching achievement and family history of khat chewing had a significant effect (P < 0.05) on lecturers' chewer. Of the studied khat chewer lecturers 35.6% reported that they chew both day and night. 66.7% of chewer lecturers reported that they had the intention to stop chewing and 82.4% considered chewing khat as hazardous. **CONCLUSION:** Khat chewing among lecturers is considered a problem and efforts are needed to help lecturers to quit chewing khat. [Mustefa JIBRIL. **Khat Chewing Habit among Lecturers of Dire Dawa University**. Rep Opinion 2021;13(11): 1-5]. ISSN 1553-9873 (print);ISSN 2375-7205 (online). <http://www.sciencepub.net/report>. 1. doi:[10.7537/marsroj131121.01](https://doi.org/10.7537/marsroj131121.01).

Keywords: Khat; lecturers; prevalence; Dire Dawa, Ecological factors

1. Introduction:

Khat (amphetamine) is the most important preventable cause of mental problem worldwide. It eventually affects half the people who chew. It is responsible for mental disorder of one in ten adults. Studies have shown that initiating chewing khat early in life is associated with increased risk for serious mental health outcomes as schizophrenia, bi polar disorder and depression.

Therefore, it is critical to prevent youth from initiating khat chewing via continuous monitoring of risk factors for chewing among them to change the modifiable factors and provide health education and addiction prevention programs.

Although university lecturers know the serious outcomes of chewing khat, yet chewing is frequent among lecturers and students. In addition, identifying the prevalence of khat use among lecturers and its reduction is a necessity to reduce khat use among future education personnel, who in turn, can significantly affect khat use among patients as well as the general population.

This study was conducted to estimate the prevalence of chewing khat among lecturers of Dire Dawa University in Dire Dawa City, to determine the ecological factors for the problem, and to show the lecturers knowledge about the effects of chewing khat.

2. Participants and Methods:

The study was cross sectional study. It was conducted in September 2021. Random selection of lecturers at the time of study (n = 377) were included, with 302 lecturers responding (response rate = 80.01%).

Data collected via personal interview and filling a questionnaire which was prepared after reviewing literature for similar studies in which all questions were related to the objectives mentioned above. Data about gender, grade, marital status, residence, educational achievement, economic status and family history of khat chewing were collected from all studied chewer and non-chewer lecturers. Data about type of khat chewing, cause of khat chewing, heaviness of khat chewing, amount of khat per day, intention to stop khat chewing, knowing khat chewing hazards, opinion in khat chewing, effect of khat chewing in social life, effect of khat chewing in personality and sense of khat chewing addiction were collected from khat chewer lecturers only.

Statistical Analysis:

Collected data were coded and analyzed using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS,

version 15). The w2-test was used as a test of significance, and differences were considered significant at P value 0.05 or less.

3. Results:

Table (1) demonstrates the percentage distribution of the studied lecturers according to khat chewing, Dire Dawa University, Dire Dawa city, Ethiopia. khat chewing were 102(33.8%) and non-khat chewing were 200(66.2), no ex. khat chewing were found among the studied lecturers.

Table (1): Percentage distribution of the studied Lecturers according to khat chewing status

Lecturers	No.	%
khat chewers	102	33.8
Non khat chewers	200	66.2
Total	302	100.0

Table (2) illustrates the relationship between some lecturers characteristics and khat chewing status in the studied universities lecturers. Males comprised (88.2%) of the respondent lecturers who chew khat with a highly significant difference ($P < 0.001$) between males and females as regards to khat using. Year of joining the university, teaching achievement and family history of chewing khat had a significant effect ($P < 0.05$) on khat chewer lecturers. On the other hand, no significant difference was found between lecturers in different marital status, residence and economic status groups as regards to khat use.

Table (2): The relationship between some Lecturers characteristics and khat chewing status in the studied Lecturers

Parameters	Khat chewers (N=102)	Non khat chewers (N=200)	Total (N = 302)	P value
Gender	No.(%)	No.(%)	No.(%)	0.000
Male	90 (88.2)	70 (35.0)	160 (53.0)	
Female	12 (11.8)	130 (65.0)	142 (47.0)	
Year of joining the university				
2 years	18 (17.6)	56 (28.0)	74 (24.5)	0.02
3 years	18 (17.6)	4 (2.0)	22 (7.3)	
4 years	28 (27.5)	74 (37.0)	102(33.8)	
5 years	22 (21.6)	26 (13.0)	48 (15.9)	
6 years	16 (15.7)	40 (20.0)	56 (18.5)	
Marital status				
Single	86 (84.3)	190 (95.0)	276 (91.4)	0.22
Married	26 (15.7)	10 (5.0)	36 (8.6)	
Residence				
Urban	96 (94.1)	196 (98.0)	292 (96.7)	0.44
Rural	6 (5.9)	4 (2.0)	10 (3.3)	
Teaching achievement				
Excellent	16 (15.7)	80 (40.0)	96 (31.8)	0.01
Very good	36 (35.3)	66 (33.0)	102 (33.8)	
Good	32 (31.4)	50 (25.0)	82 (27.2)	
Accepted& weak	18 (17.7)	4 (2.0)	22 (7.3)	
Economic status				
High	44 (43.1)	92 (46.0)	136 (45.0)	0.53
Middle	52 (51.0)	106 (53.0)	158 (52.3)	
Low	6 (5.9)	2 (1.0)	8 (2.6)	
Family history of Khat chewing				
Yes	88 (86.3)	132 (66.0)	220 (72.8)	0.01
No	14 (13.7)	68 (34.0)	82 (27.2)	

Table (3) shows age at beginning, type and causes of chewing khat among studied lecturers, 35.2 % of studied khat user lecturers began to chew when they were <15 years old. Of the studied khat user lecturers 35.6% reported that they chew both day and night and 25.5% reported that peer pressure was their cause to khat habit.

Table (3): Age at beginning, type and causes of chewing khat among studied khat user lecturers

Parameters	No.	%
Age at beginning of chewing khat		
Less than 15 years	36	35.2
15 years	62	41.3
18 years or more	24	23.5
Habit of khat using		
Day	34	33.3
Night	32	31.3
Both day and night	36	35.6
Causes of khat habit		
Peer pressure	26	25.5
Father or brother pressure	8	7.8
Trying to calms down	10	9.8
For experience	18	17.6
Sense of boring	4	3.9
Multiple causes	36	35.2

Table (4) shows frequency of khat usage, daily consumption pattern and sense of khat addiction among studied khat user lecturers. Of the studied khat user lecturers 70.6% of khat user lecturers reported that they used to chew daily and 33.4% reported that they used to chew 1/2 kilo or more daily. However, 60.8% reported that they had the sense of chewing addiction.

Table (4): Frequency, daily consumption pattern and sense of khat addiction among studied khat chewers lecturers

Parameters	No.	%
Frequency of khat chewing		
Daily	72	70.6
Weekly	12	11.8
Experimental	18	17.6
Daily consumption pattern		
1/2 kilo or more	34	33.4
One kilo	42	41.2
Less than one kilo	26	25.5
Sense of khat addiction		
Yes	62	60.8
No	26	25.5
Don't know	14	13.7

Table (5) shows lecturers opinion on khat habit, impact of khat chewing on social life and on users personality and intention to stop chewing khat among studied khat user lecturers. The majority of khat user lecturers (82.4%) considered khat habit as hazardous and 56.9% considered that khat chewing had a good impact on social life and 64.7% considered that khat chewing had a good impact on their personality. However, 66.7% only of khat user lecturers reported that they had the intention to stop chewing.

Table (5): Lecturers opinion on khat habit, impact of khat on social life and on users' personality and intention to stop chewing among studied khat user lecturers

Parameters	No.	%
Opinion on khat habit		
Hazardous	84	82.4
Has benefits	4	3.9
Has neither benefits nor hazards	2	2.0
Has benefits and hazards	8	7.8
Don't know	4	3.9
Impact of khat habit on social life		
Good	58	56.9
Bad	30	29.4
Don't know	14	13.7
Impact of chewing khat on personality		
Good	66	64.7
Bad	16	15.7
Don't know	20	19.6
Intention to stop chewing		
Yes	68	66.7
No	34	33.4

4. Discussion

The prevalence of khat habit among Dire Dawa university lecturers in the present study was 33.8% of the responding lecturers. The current study revealed a highly significant difference ($P < 0.001$) between males and females as regards khat habit.

In addition, the results revealed that year of joining the institution of lecturers and family history of khat habit had a significant effect on khat habit of lecturers ($P < 0.05$). On the other hand, the effects of marital status, residence and economic status on khat habit of the lecturers were insignificant ($P > 0.05$). Results revealed that 76.5% of the studied khat user lecturers began to chew when they were younger than 18 years old. Of the studied khat user lecturers 25.5 % reported that the cause of chewing khat is peer pressure.

As regards heaviness of the khat habit 70.6% of the studied khat user lecturers reported that they chew daily. In the current study, 66.7% of the studied khat user lecturers reported that they had the intention to stop chewing. The current study revealed that all the studied khat user lecturers knew khat habit hazards and affects health.

Study limitations

The present study has some limitations. First, the response rate is 80.01%. This is considered a problem if those who did not participate in the study were khat

chewers or heavy khat users. Further, as a cross-sectional survey, causality cannot be tested.

Conclusion and recommendations

Khat habit among lecturers is considered a serious problem as they will become the instructors of the future students' personnel. Efforts are needed to help lecturers to quit khat habit and this is considered as a preventive approach to the problem of khat habit. Anti-khat habit education should be included in undergraduate curricula, with implementing anti-khat habit campaigns.

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11/2/2021