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Title: Tobacco smoking prevalence and patterns in Croatian pupils in year 2011 – Results of Croatian national Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS)

Dr. Dijana 16456 Mayer dijana.mayer@googlemail.com MD ¹, Dr. Ivana 16457 Pavic Simetin ivana.pavic@hzjz.hr ¹ and Dr. Divo 16458 Ljubicic divo.ljubicic@gmail.com MD ². ¹ Department for Monitoring and Analysing School Health Service Activities, School and Adolescent Medicine and Addiction Prevention Disease Service, Croatian National Institute of Public Health, Zagreb, Croatia, 10000 and ² Department of Internal Medicine, University Hospital Dubrava, Zagreb, Croatia, 10000 .

Body: Introduction: Important changes have occurred in the prevalence and patterns of cigarette smoking by young people. Given the known consequences of smoking for morbidity and mortality and the nature of smoking habits established during adolescence, changes in smoking behaviors carry extraordinary implications for the health of these youngsters throughout their lives. Aims and objectives: to investigate the prevalence and pattern of cigarette smoking among Croatian pupils. Methods: The Croatia GYTS (Global Youth Tobacco Survey) was a school-based survey of pupils in 7th and 8th grade primary, and 1st grade secondary school conducted in year 2011. A two-stage cluster sample design was used to produce representative data for all of Croatia. A total of 3,551 students aged 13-15 participated in study. Results: The overall response rate was 90.1%. Any form of tobacco is currently used by 28.6% pupils (boys = 28.6%, girls = 27.9%); 66.5% of pupils had ever smoked cigarettes (boys = 66.6%, girls = 65.9%). More than one-quarter (27.2%) currently smoke cigarettes (boys = 26.7%, girls = 27.0%); 12.0% smoke daily manufactured cigarettes (boys = 12.1%, girls = 11.2%); 14.9% currently smoke cigars (boys = 15.2%, girls = 14.1%). Almost one quarter of ever smokers initiated smoking before age ten (boys = 30.4%, girls = 16.3%). Of never smokers, even 22.1% are likely to initiate smoking next year. Conclusions: The results of Croatian GYTS 2011 indicate significant tobacco use and exposure to tobacco among pupils in Croatia. There is an urgent need to prevent tobacco smoke prevalence among these individuals and reduce morbidity and mortality throughout their lives.