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Title: Behavior, knowledge and attitude of Iranian professional athletes towards smoking

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Body: Purpose This study aimed to assess the rate of tobacco consumption among professional athletes in Iran and assessing their knowledge and attitude in this regard. Materials and Methods: A total of 738 athletes from 10 different types of sports were evaluated. Athletes were all members of the priority leagues. After obtaining consent from the Physical Education Organization and coordination with the related federations, athletes were asked to fill out the standard questionnaire. Findings: All understudy subjects were males. The mean age was 28.4 ± 2.7 yrs. A total of 46.7% had high school diploma. In general, 293 subjects (39.7%) were playing individual and 445 (60.3%) were playing team sports. The mean age of initiation of sport in these subjects was reported to be 12.3 ± 4.01 yrs... Sixty four subjects (9%) were current smokers. Twenty one cases (44.7%) were smoking less than 10 cigarettes a day. A total of 26 (66.7%) current smokers stated that smoking helps them in sport competitions. A total of 40 sportsmen from individual sports were current smokers, this rate was 24 (5.5%) among team players ($P=0.00$). The mean score of knowledge about hazards of smoking was 7.8 ± 0.62 and the mean score of attitude was 26.4 ± 4.1 . Conclusion: Rate of smoking among professional athletes is lower than general population average. So participation in organized sports may be a protective factor against tobacco use in people. Percentage of smoker athletes was significantly higher in individual sports compared to team sports. Athletes had good knowledge about hazards of smoking and had a positive attitude in this respect. Further studies are needed to evaluate reasons of cigarette and hookah smoking among athletes.