European Respiratory Society Annual Congress 2013

Abstract Number: 944

Publication Number: P1076

Abstract Group: 6.3. Tobacco, Smoking Control and Health Education **Keyword 1:** Adolescents **Keyword 2:** Epidemiology **Keyword 3:** Smoking

Title: Adolescent smokers overestimate the rate of smoking peers

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Body: The majority of teenagers want to meet the social norm of their peers, but their statuses in return influence their perception of this standard. Method: 2011 and 2012 PST surveys that measure annually by self-administered questionnaire smoking status of teenagers of 2% of classes in Paris included a question about the estimated number of smokers in the class. This rate was compared with the actual rates of smoker (daily + occasional in this group. Results: Overall there are 28.0% of smokers in the population, whereas students consider it to 35.1%. Non-smoking boys give almost exact estimate (28.4%), non-smoking girls a slight overestimation (30.6%). Smokers give a strongest overestimation: 53.2% believe smoking peers. Overall the smoker estimate is double the reality. Occasional smokers and ex-smokers give an overestimate half of smokers. In the 12-15-year-old schoolchildren, whereas smoking is 17.8% real, the estimates are lower in non-smokers (16.8%) and overestimated more than 3 times daily smokers (49.4%). Among the 16-19 years-old we observe a smaller overall overestimation (estimated 51.4% among non-smokers and 59.4% of smokers for actual consumption of 41.0%). Conclusion: if the non-smoking teens have a satisfactory estimate of their peers smoking rate then smokers greatly overestimate the smoking rate. The overestimation is higher among girls than among boys and among college students than among older students. It is important to establish the truth on the social norm, in fact over 80% of these students are not daily smokers. The study was supported by Academie de Paris and local national insurance (CPAM).