Author's covering letter for initial submission

Title: Children's Family Life Stress, Rule-breaking Behavior, Parenting Style and Academic Performance in Relation to Gender-specific Cigarette Smoking: a School-based. Cross-sectional Study

Authors:

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Comments: see over
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Dear Editor-in-Chief,

On behalf of my research group, I would like to present for your consideration our recently finished study ‘Children’s Family Life Stress, Rule-breaking Behavior, Parenting Style and Academic Performance in Relation to Gender-specific Cigarette Smoking: a School-based Cross-sectional Study’ to the BMC Public Health.

My team has the fortunate opportunity to be among the most active research group investigating impact of cigarette smoking on children in Taiwan. Some of our earlier works have been published in international peer review journals.[1-8]

2 Huang HL, Hsu CC, Peng WD et al. Analysis of influential factors associated with the smoking behavior of aboriginal schoolchildren in remote Taiwanese mountainous areas J Sch Health 2012;82:318-327.

A variety of factors has been found to be associated with elementary students’ adoption of smoking. However, little literature has explored the factors contributing to gender-specific smoking behavior among elementary school students. Understanding the factors associated with gender differences in youth smoking is crucial for the development of gender-specific prevention strategies. The current study was to analyze children’s life stress, rule-breaking behavior, parenting style and academic achievement associated with their cigarette smoking. In this manuscript, data on students’ smoking behavior and related factors was obtained from the 2008 and 2009 Control of School-aged Children Smoking Study surveys of representative 3rd to 6th grade students sample (n= 5,353). The association between three groups (never, former and current smokers) and related factors were examined simultaneously using unordered polytomous logistic regression models.

Our major findings were significant gender differences in factors associated with a student’s cigarette smoking behavior. The middle and low grade academic performance in Mathematics, and the neglecting and authoritarian parenting styles, appeared to be strongly associated with
smoking behavior in male students in the present study. No significant correlation among female’s smoking behavior, parenting style and academic performance was found. The other significant factors associated male smokers were two or more family life stress events, using swear words and stealing behavior; whereas two or more family life stress events, breaking things when angry and stealing behavior were associated with female smokers. These findings suggest that gender-specific intervention aimed at reducing underage smoking among elementary students need to place emphasize on those who suffer high levels of stress, have rule-breaking behavior and low academic performance, and attempt to enhance their child-parent relationships as well as to improve support system at school for children, especially in regard to male students.

This manuscript is original and has not been published or considered elsewhere. All authors of this paper have directly participated in the planning, the collecting of samples, and the analysis of data and have approved the final version submitted. The manuscript was English edited by the Wallace Academic Editing. This research was founded by the National Science Council and the Kaohsiung Medical University Research Foundation in Taiwan and was approved by the Human Experiment and Ethics Committee. I will serve as the corresponding author.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

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