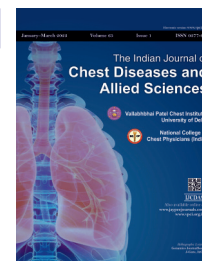


# When Kids Played Key Role in Tobacco Cessation

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## ABSTRACT

Tobacco-free society is one of the goals and cherished vision of the World Health Organization (WHO). The health-related ill effects of tobacco are devastating and have ruined families due to multiple health morbidities and economic consequences thereby. Prevention of tobacco habit and tobacco cessation are key methods that should be adopted to avoid such devastation. Amongst various strategies adopted and recommended for tobacco cessation, advice given by very young children for tobacco cessation seems to be an innovative tool especially when one elder in the family are addicted to tobacco. We have come across such families where the young children of these families advised their parents to leave the habit of tobacco. Such an initiative from the young generation can have long-lasting influence on tobacco prevention strategies.

**Keywords:** Prevention of tobacco related diseases, Smokeless tobacco, Tobacco cessation.

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## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS ARTICLE

CAD = Coronary artery disease; HTN = Hypertension; NCDs = Noncommunicable diseases; PTCA = Percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty; TG = Triglyceride; T2DM = Type 2 diabetes mellitus; WHO = World Health Organization.

### Dear Editor,

This editorial is being submitted to bring up an important issue of the prevention of tobacco use in our society. We all know that India is facing a serious problem of tobacco use and any effort to prevent its use in society will have exponential benefits for the society. Keeping in view the benefits of counseling tobacco cessation, we have highlighted the role of small children who can be an ambassador for advising their parents to quit smoking or tobacco use. Small children are observant of everything in their surroundings and when they see their parents smoking, they start questioning and confronting their parents for this addicting habit. Parents are sensitive to the needs of their growing children and advise from their children can have wonderful effects on quitting this habit. We have come across such families where the young children of these families advised their parents to leave the habit of tobacco. Such an initiative from the young generation can have long-lasting influence on tobacco prevention strategies.

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Tobacco-free society is the cherished aim of the World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>1</sup> To accomplish this much-desired objective one has to create awareness among people about the ill effects of tobacco so that no one picks up this habit anymore and motivate others to quit this habit who smoke or take tobacco in any form for their interest and for the good of the society.<sup>2,3</sup> We report herewith four cases observed during 5 years where young kids have played a key role in persuading their parents to quit tobacco (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Summary of four case examples where kids motivated their parents for tobacco cessation

S. no.	Name	Age	Sex	Tobacco type	Diagnosis	Who motivated	What prompted the kid to motivate
1	PK	45 years	M	Smokeless tobacco (10 years)	HTN	4 years daughter	Listening to the harms produced by tobacco in hospital OPD
2	BSR	60 years	M	Bidi (35+ years)	T2DM, central obesity, CAD	5 years granddaughter	Persistent cough and bad smell
3	GRV	45 years	M	Bidi (30 years)	HTN, T2DM, Dyslipidemia (TG+), Left renal colic, cholelithiasis	11 years son	Mother of the child asked the son to keep a watch on smoking and report to attending doctor
4	RRS	65 years	M	Bidi (45 years)	HTN, CAD, Post-PTCA	3 years grand-daughter	Recurring cough, breathlessness and bad smell associated with smoking

HTN, hypertension; T2DM, type 2 diabetes mellitus; CAD, coronary artery disease; TG, triglyceride; PTCA, percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty

Implication: These instances provide us a lead that young kids as small as 3 years can be used as ambassadors of important health messages against tobacco, alcohol, and consumption of junk food to elders in their family.<sup>4</sup> It is submitted that this preventive strategy using young kids to sensitize elders in the family will be another effective tool in combating tobacco-induced epidemic of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). A sensitized child is a powerful ambassador of change at home.

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