

Smoking in Adolescence

A number of articles recently published in pediatric and public health journals have called attention to the rather alarming incidence of cigarette smoking in teen-agers and the broader implications of this practice to daily living patterns and life adjustment of this group. A recent survey of over 800 adolescents of both sexes disclosed that starting about age 14 or 15, smoking by boys becomes progressively more common until about age 18 when 90 per cent are smoking at least occasionally. The incidence in girls is somewhat less but at age 18 about 60 per cent are smoking to some degree. Positive associations have been found between regular or daily smoking and a high frequency of visits to the school health room, frequent absences from classes and a school performance of grade C or lower. Smoking does not appear to be causally related but seems more an indication of a way of life.

Other factors previously have been defined as related to a high incidence of smoking in adolescence. Teen-age smokers, in comparison to nonsmokers, spend more time watching TV and going to movies and dances. They are more likely to own cars

GP
76 volume xxxii, number 1 GP

TIMN 280238