



Reply to “Waterpipe Smoking among Herat University Students: Prevalence, Attitudes, and Associated Factors”

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We are thankful to Masoud Haghani, the Associate Professor of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences for his concerns about our data presented on “*Waterpipe Smoking among Herat University Students: Prevalence, Attitudes, and Associated Factors*”¹ and for having read the article meticulously.

As we mentioned in the “data collection” section of the article, the definition of *waterpipe smoking* was “*ever smoking*”, encompassing anyone who used waterpipe even once in his/her life. An old tradition among Afghan families, to make a gathering more friendly and relaxing, is to prepare a waterpipe for visitors. In Afghanistan, girls often stay at home after school taking care of their families and guests. It is very common for girls to prepare a waterpipe for such purposes and probably the main reason why more girls have reported “*ever smoking waterpipe*” than boys in this study. However, female participants in this study did not continue waterpipe smoking to the present time, and it, subsequently, reduced the number of current female waterpipe smokers. On the other hand, despite the fact that 54.1% of the boys have smoked waterpipe at least once in their lives, half of them (27.0%) also currently use waterpipe regularly. This, as we discussed in our paper, is because more boys gather and socialize together in Herat than their female counterparts. Cafes and restaurants in Herat serve waterpipe (different

types and flavors) to their customers. As many male university students prefer to do their group assignments in cafes, it makes them prone to waterpipe smoking.

Dr. Haghani also correctly noted that economic status has had an impact on the waterpipe use in women compared to men, in our study. We agree with this implication. Although a concrete justification for this is yet to be investigated, we hypothesize that a large number of female Herat University students come from families with higher economic status.

We, therefore, thank Dr. Haghani for his thorough reading of our article and provide the above-mentioned reasons for some discrepancies in the rate of waterpipe smoking among male and female students at Herat University.

Competing Interests

None declared.

Ethical Approval

Not applicable

References

1. Niazi AU, Shayan NA, Ozgur S, Joya SA, Ozcebe H. Waterpipe Smoking among Herat University Students: Prevalence, Attitudes, and Associated Factors. *Addict Health*. 2020;12(4):235-243. doi:10.22122/ahj.v12i4.277.

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