

Czech Media Knowledge and Interest of Tobacco Use



DVOŘÁKOVÁ, H.^{1,4}, KRÁLÍKOVÁ, E.^{2,3,4} RAMEŠ, J.²

¹ Pardubice Regional Hospital, Chrudim Hospital, Czech Republic

² Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, 1st Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague and General University Hospital in Prague, Czech Republic

³ Tobacco Addiction Centre, 3rd Medical Department, 1st Faculty of Medicine and General University Hospital, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic

⁴ Society for Tobacco Dependence Treatment, Czech Republic

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BACKGROUND: The media have a vital role to play in educating the population about the effects of smoking on health and the economy and the possibility of treatment for tobacco dependence. This epidemic is responsible for one sixth of all the deaths in the country, more than AIDS, alcohol, illegal drugs, and street accidents combined. **AIMS:** To map media workers' interest in and knowledge of the tobacco epidemic. **MATERIAL AND METHODS:** A questionnaire with 15 questions on the basic facts associated with tobacco use and control, including an offer of correct answers. We contacted 213 workers across all types of media by addressable mail. Another 629 contacts were made using emails available from media websites. We received

a total of 39 validly completed questionnaires – a response rate of 4.63%. **RESULTS:** With the response rate of 5%, we assumed that answers were provided mainly by those who have been dealing with the issue. However, the most correct answers occurred in only half of the questions (8 out of 16 possible answers). **CONCLUSION:** Surprisingly, the media showed little interest in the tobacco epidemic, and zero interest was found on the part of editors responsible for economic matters, with even some negative reactions being experienced (1.88%). While the answers were presumably provided by those media workers who are concerned with the issue, their understanding of the problem seemed very poor in contrast with the impact of tobacco use.

KEY WORDS: CZECH MEDIA – TOBACCO DEPENDENCE – SMOKING – KNOWLEDGE – INTEREST

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Address for correspondence: Eva Králíková, M.D. / Eva.kralikova@lf1.cuni.cz / Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, 1st Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague and General University Hospital in Prague, Studničkova 7, 128 00 Prague 2, Czech Republic