

# Tobacco use, awareness and cessation among Malayali tribes, Yelagiri Hills

**Delfin Lovelina Francis**

Tagore Dental College and Hospital, India

## Abstract

Health is a state of complete wellbeing free from any discomfort and pain. Despite remarkable world-wide progress in the field of diagnostic, curative and preventive medicine, still there are large populations of people living in isolation in natural and unpolluted surroundings far away from civilisation, maintaining their traditional values, customs, beliefs and myths. India has the second largest tribal population of the world next to the African countries. About half of the world's autochthonous people live in India, thus making India home to many tribes which have an interesting and varied history of origins, customs and social practices. The present study was conducted to assess the tobacco use, awareness and its effect on health among Malayali tribes, Yelagiri Hills, Tamil nadu, India. The inhabitants of the 14 villages of the Yelagiri hills, who have completed 18 years and residing for more than 15 years present on the day of examination and who were willing to participate in the study were included. Data was collected from a cross-sectional survey, using a Survey Proforma, clinical examination and a pre-tested questionnaire which included Demographic data, tobacco habits. An intra-oral examination was carried out by a single examiner to assess the Oral Health Status using WHO Oral Health Surveys – Basic Methods Proforma (1997). SPSS version 15 was used for statistical analysis. Results showed that among 660 study population, 381 (57.7%) had no formal education. Among the study population 75% had the habit of alcohol consumption. Of those who had the habit of smoking, 26% smoked beedi, 10.9% smoked cigarette, 65% chewed raw tobacco, 18% chewed Hans and 28% had a combination of smoking and smokeless tobacco usage. The reason for practicing these habits were as a measure to combat the cold, relieving stress and body pain after work, and the lack of awareness of the hazards of the materials used. Prevalence of oral mucosal lesions in the study population was due to tobacco usage and alcohol consumption and lack of awareness regarding the deleterious effects of the products used. From the results of this study it may be concluded that the Malayali tribes were characterized by a lack of awareness about oral health, deep rooted dental beliefs, high prevalence of tobacco use and limited access to health services.

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## Biography

Delfin Lovelina Francis is an assistant professor of Department of Public Health Dentistry from Tagore Dental College and Hospital, Chennai.