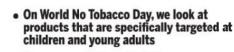
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CIGGIES TRAP KIDS IN A 'CANDIED' HAZE

Amit Bandre



 Young users believe that they are making a healthier choice by picking fruit or other 'friendly' flavours

Express Features

16-year-old was showing signs of acute asthma and parents rushed him to a private hospital. On further probing they found that he has been taking flavoured tobacco products regularly, and after many hours of counselling he is now symptom-free.

Children often mistake fruit-flavoured tobacco products for a candy, and these products are easily available by the roadside. There is smokeless tobacco that could be mistaken for a harmless mint – and they could come as chewies, dips or snuffs – and there are hookahs and electronic cigarettes that give out fumes that smell of honey and fruits.

These could attract even four-year-olds, according to a Harvard School of Public Health study, but most doctors in the city say that the most vulnerable here are adolescents even as young as 11 years old. Counsellor Dr Geetha Appachu says that a survey has recorded that "more than 25% of high school students, both boys and girls in classes between 8 and 12, have tried some kind of tobacco products."

Dr Ramprasad Attur, child psychiatrist with Tender Minds Clinic, says that packing is what attracts children to non-smokable products: "Most of them could be mistaken for a mouth-freshener... They also come in small sizes and they are easy to hide and cheap to buy." Attur says that a survey revealed that many are not asked for any age proof before selling them a tobacco product.

Geetha lists different products targetting children: "Apart from the common cigarettes, there are flavoured cigars, smokeless tobacco, hookah, pipes, electronic cigarettes and dissolvable tobacco to name a few." A 2010 study by Harvard School of Public Health said that dissolvable tobacco, which resembles candy, could result in poisoning among young children who would experience nausea and vomiting. The lead author of the study, Professor Gregory N Connolly, had commented that to a four-year-old the pellets look more like candy than cigarettes.

Dr Sunil Kumar K, a consultant - interventional pulmonology at Aster CMI hospital, says, "Flavoured chewable tobacco products are also on the rise and have known to cause a large number of oral and GI malignancies. Children often mistake it for a treat and the nicotine content causes addiction-perpetuating a behaviour similar to cigarette addiction."

Children mistake it for a healthy option,

Children mistake it for a healthy opton, says Dr KS Satish, pulmonologist at Fortis Hospital. "Children start with an urge to try it once," he says. "These come in various flavours such as mango and cherry mixed with tobacco in bidis give them a high and makes them feel like they are having something healthy. Unlike cigarettes, cigars are longer and look attractive to children. They think their outing at a pub is incomplete without a hookah. Children have fallen victim to look, feel and taste such tobacco products."

REALITY CHECK: TOBACCO

REALITY CHECK: TOBACCO SALES AROUND CITY SCHOOLS Contd on P3

BREAKING MYTHS

ROLL YOUR OWN, BU'IT'S STILL A KILLER

Ramzauva Chhakchhuak

trend that is catching fire among smokers ir city is the practice of rolling and smoking yown cigarettes. The reasons for ditching yer regular packaged cigarettes and resorting to lies' or 'roll-ups' are varied. Many, however, are aware of its health implications.

Dr Vijay Agarwal, consultant, medical onco HCG Enterprises Ltd, points out that rolled cigan are becoming popular and are preferred by you generation or people with low socio-economic pr as they are perceived to be cheaper, make them ap 'cool' and less harmful.

Rollie Rationale

WORLD

TOBACCO

DAY

Take Sadananda Ramesh, a photographer – he sta using hand-rolled cigarettes when a friend told that it was less harmful than regular cigarette was told that it was comparatively better, had le chemicals and harmful substances. For example the paper used in regular cigarettes is quite harr however, with regular rolling paper it is not so I heard," says Ramesh. He also searched the inte and claimed to have found articles about its less ardous nature.

Cost cutting is also another major reason for pe using roll-ups. Imitiaz Ahmed, a systems engineer healthcare firm, was smoking at least five cigar a day. Six months back, he switched to roll-ups an says there has been a drastic decrease in his sp ing. "I would spend around ₹500 for a packet c bacco, another 200 for filters and rolling p

This one time purchase, would be enough me for around 45 days. Plus I can roll rettes of any sizes to reduce the amout tobacco," he says. Imtiyaz would other spend around ₹70 per day for his regigneretes. "It's ₹3000 for 45 days as aga ₹700 with the roll-ups," he adds.

Others like Simran Chadda, a media pr sional, smoke rolled cigarettes just for its flar

Others like Simran Chadda, a media pr sional, smoke rolled cigarettes just for its flar "I got a taste of rolled tobacco at a party at my frie place last November: That's when I felt I tasted res bacco and realized what I 've been missing out ontaste of pure tobacco, with no added flavours or ch cals," says Simran who smokes rolled cigarettes socially.

Equally, if not, More Harmful

Dr Amod Nayak, consultant and ophthalmologis Dr Agarwal's Eye Hospital, says most have a milef about that rollies are more 'natural', and a 'safer' option to regular cigarettes. "In factory-n cigarettes, the additives make up about halfa-per of the dry weight of the tobacco. But in the rol the additives are about 18 per cent of the dry we In other words, rollies have about 38 times more a tives than factory-made," he says. He also highlig a Norwegian study done in 1996 among 26,000 smo which showed that rollies were associated with hir risks of lung cancer. Other studies also consists show a two-to-three times increased risk of cance

Need Checks

Dr. Sachin Kumar, senior consultant, pulmor Sakra World Hospital, says the practice is defined more harmful as there is no quality control and youth would add and subtract anything they like cording to their preference. "Rolled cigarattes she completely avoided as this practice, which so only with rolling of cigarette, leads to adding of stances like marijuana and hashish that make more addictive and dangerous," he adds.