

Why Does Hookah Appeal to Youngsters?

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It's surprising to see the demand for [hookah](#) surge despite its adverse health effects. A new research unravels the reason behind the rise in consumption of hookah, especially amongst the younger lot. According to the study published in the journal *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*, many youngsters associate hookah consumption with a relaxing experience, ignoring the numerous health ailments it may lead them with. The study stated that no amount of education or awareness about its health hazards will dissuade people from consuming hookah until the positive and romantic perceptions attached to it are effectively combated.

"It was surprising to learn that college students, even when they were aware of the health dangers associated with hookah tobacco smoking at baseline, still went on to use a hookah for the first time, However, students who had less positive attitudes towards hookah smoking were significantly less likely to initiate. This suggests that countering positive attitudes may be at least as effective as emphasising harm in preventing initiation of hookah tobacco smoking," said Jaime Sidani, senior research specialist- Program for Research on Media and Health, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

Sidani and her colleagues analysed a sample of 569 college students who were surveyed about their attitudes, knowledge and behaviours regarding hookah smoking. 13 per cent of the students initiated hookah tobacco use and it was seen that the students were more likely to initiate hookah use if they had positive attitudes towards hookah smoking and if they thought it was a socially acceptable practice amongst their peers.

"Hookah tobacco smoking does not seem to be hampered by many of the negative social stigmas of cigarette smoking, If educational programmes can help students to cut through the positive portrayals and marketing of hookah smoking, it may be possible to make hookah smoking less attractive and socially acceptable, resulting in less initiation," said Sidani. *Inputs from PTI*

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