Smoking prevalence rates of hospital in-patients versus those of the general population

It is common practice for smoking cessation programs in health care to be geared toward the outpatient population. Consequently, there is very little smoking intervention focused on hospital inpatients. The objectives of this study were to assess the impact of such trends and to offer recommendations for implementing smoking cessation programs. A data set of 690 University Hospital admissions was randomly selected to represent the in-patient population. Of the 690 patients only 100 patients were selected for the study. The charts of the patients were evaluated for smoking histories, while age, gender, insurance type, and attending specialty were present in the original data set. Upon analyzing the data we found that 44% of the inpatients were smokers, while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported a 22.5% smoking prevalence rate for the general population. These results indicate that smoking cessation programs should be geared toward the hospital in-patient population in addition to the general public. Furthermore, we cross tabulated the information from the data set and the smoking histories that we obtained from the patients chart. The results of this portion of the study revealed a higher smoking prevalence in males, Medicaid insurance users, and patients aged 17 to 60 years old. Patients admitted for surgery and cardiopulmonary attending specialties also had significantly higher smoking prevalence rates. This information can be used to both direct where new programs could be started and bring to light those groups within the in-patient population that would benefit most from such programs.