

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Title Page

- **Title:** *Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria*
- **Submitted By:** Adekunle Olatayo Adeoti
Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
- **Award:** Pan African Thoracic Society 2024 Lung Health Initiative Award (PALI 2024 Award)
- **Date:** 12th November 2024

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ’s School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

2. Executive Summary

Tobacco use among youths is an escalating public health concern in Nigeria, with early exposure frequently leading to lifelong addiction. In 2023, the World Health Organization Global Report estimates that tobacco use accounts for approximately 8 million preventable deaths annually. Recent trends indicate increased adoption of rebranded tobacco products, such as shisha and e-cigarettes, often perceived as less harmful—a misconception that necessitates urgent intervention.

In response, a comprehensive tobacco sensitization programme was organized at Christ’s School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, under the auspices of the Pan African Thoracic Society 2024 Lung Health Initiative Award (PALI 2024 Award). The initiative aimed to educate students on the dangers of tobacco in all its forms, leveraging the influence of notable alumni as tobacco-free role models. A “No Tobacco” club (NOTOB Club) was established within the school to sustain awareness and advocacy. To reinforce key messages, educational materials, including T-shirts, pens, stickers, and posters, were distributed among the students.

The programme extended beyond tobacco awareness, encompassing free health consultations for teachers and health promotion activities geared toward the early detection of non-communicable diseases. Furthermore, behavioral change was encouraged through the introduction of baseball, in collaboration with the Ekiti Kete Baseball Team, as a positive alternative to risky habits.

The event achieved significant engagement, with enthusiastic participation from students who pledged to abstain from tobacco and serve as ambassadors of the NOTOB Club. This outcome underscores the program’s immediate and potential long-term impact on fostering a tobacco-free generation.

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

3. Introduction

Tobacco use among youths is a pressing public health concern globally, and particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) like Nigeria. Adolescents are a vulnerable group, often targeted by aggressive marketing strategies from multinational tobacco companies, which normalize smoking and other forms of tobacco consumption. Early exposure to tobacco significantly increases the likelihood of lifelong addiction, making youth-focused prevention efforts crucial.

In recent years, there has been a rise in the use of rebranded tobacco products among youths, including shisha, e-cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco. These products are often perceived as less harmful alternatives to traditional cigarettes, a misconception that contributes to their popularity. This trend is concerning because these products still pose serious health risks, including respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular diseases, and cancers.

Globally, tobacco use is a leading preventable cause of death, responsible for approximately 8 million deaths annually, according to the World Health Organization's 2023 report. In Nigeria, weak regulatory frameworks, widespread availability, and cultural acceptance of tobacco products exacerbate the problem. Furthermore, studies have shown that exposure to smoking by school personnel or peers significantly increases the likelihood of smoking initiation among students.

Addressing tobacco use among youths requires targeted interventions that combine education, community engagement, and policy enforcement. School-based programs are particularly effective in creating awareness and fostering healthy behaviors early in life. By focusing on prevention and behavior change, these programs can help reduce the burden of tobacco-related diseases and promote a tobacco-free generation.

The tobacco sensitization program is highly relevant as it addresses the critical public health issue of rising tobacco use among youths in Nigeria, a demographic increasingly targeted by the tobacco industry. Early exposure to tobacco often results in lifelong addiction, escalating the burden of tobacco-related diseases such as lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Interventions targeting this vulnerable group are essential to mitigate the health, social, and economic consequences associated with tobacco use.

The programme aligns with the objectives of the Pan African Thoracic Society (PATS) by promoting lung health through education, community engagement, and preventive measures.

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

4. Objectives of the Program

- To raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco use and its alternatives (e.g., shisha, e-cigarettes).
- To collect minimal information on the tobacco use among the students of Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti
- To encourage behaviour change and promote healthier lifestyles through the introduction of a novel sporting event- Baseball.

5. Planning and Implementation

- **Planning Phase:** The planning phase of the tobacco sensitization program was meticulously designed to ensure its success and alignment with significant public health observances. Collaborations with key stakeholders were a cornerstone of this phase. The school authorities at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, were instrumental in facilitating access to the students and providing logistical support. Additionally, a partnership was formed with the Ekiti Kete Baseball Team to incorporate sports as a medium for promoting healthy lifestyles, an innovative approach to fostering behavioral change.

Educational materials were thoughtfully developed to reinforce the anti-tobacco message. These included customized T-shirts, pens, and posters, which served as both educational tools and lasting reminders of the program's objectives. The materials were designed to be visually appealing and impactful, ensuring that the message of a tobacco-free lifestyle resonated with the students and the broader community.

Initially, the programme was planned to coincide with World Lung Day on September 25, 2024. However, logistic reasons necessitated a shift to November 12, 2024. Interestingly, this new date held even greater significance as it falls within Lung Cancer Awareness Month, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Awareness Month, and also marks World Pneumonia Day. These observances are all intricately linked to the consequences of tobacco use, making the revised schedule particularly relevant. The timing provided an opportunity to amplify the program's message and align it with global health campaigns, emphasizing the importance of tobacco prevention in reducing the burden of respiratory diseases.

This strategic planning ensured that the programme not only addressed its immediate objectives but also contributed to broader awareness and advocacy efforts, enhancing its impact and sustainability

- **Implementation Phase:** The implementation phase of the tobacco sensitization programme was executed with a structured timeline and a series of impactful activities

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

aimed at engaging students and fostering a tobacco-free culture at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti.

The programme was held on November 12, 2024, coinciding with significant global health observances such as Lung Cancer Awareness Month, COPD Awareness Month, and World Pneumonia Day. The event spanned the entire day, with sessions strategically organized to maximize student participation and engagement.

The day commenced with a sensitization lecture that I delivered to the students using Powerpoint with pictures and a short video on the consequences of tobacco use. I highlighted the health risks associated with tobacco use, including traditional cigarettes, shisha, and e-cigarettes using visual aids and interactive discussions where I encouraged the students to ask questions and share their perspectives. The session emphasized the deceptive marketing of rebranded tobacco products and dispelled myths about their perceived safety.

As a key outcome of the programme, the NOTOB Club (No Tobacco Club) was established to sustain anti-tobacco advocacy within the school. Students who pledged to abstain from tobacco were inducted as members, with leadership roles assigned to foster ownership and accountability. The club was envisioned as a platform for peer-led advocacy, enabling members to spread the tobacco-free message to their peers, families, and communities.

In partnership with the Ekiti Kete Baseball Team, the programme included a baseball session as a means of promoting healthy and engaging alternatives to tobacco use. Students participated in a friendly match, which not only introduced them to the sport but also reinforced the message of adopting positive lifestyle choices. Baseball was chosen for its emphasis on teamwork, discipline, and physical activity—qualities that counteract the risks associated with tobacco consumption.

6. Programme Highlights:

The tobacco sensitization program at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, was marked by several impactful activities designed to educate and engage the school community while promoting a tobacco-free lifestyle.

Educational Lectures: Engaging and interactive lectures were delivered to students, emphasizing the health risks associated with tobacco use, including emerging products like shisha and e-cigarettes. The sessions incorporated visual aids and real-life examples to ensure the message was relatable and impactful.

Free Health Consultations: Teachers were offered free health consultations, including screenings for common non-communicable diseases, reinforcing the programme's commitment to holistic health promotion.

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Sports Sessions: In collaboration with the Ekiti Kete Baseball Team, students participated in a baseball session. This activity served as a healthy alternative to risky behaviors, fostering teamwork and discipline while promoting physical fitness.

Distribution of Educational Materials: To reinforce the anti-tobacco message, customized educational materials were distributed to students. These included: T-Shirts: Branded with "No Tobacco" slogans to serve as a visual and lasting reminder of the program's objectives. Pens and Posters: Featuring facts and warnings about the dangers of tobacco use to stimulate awareness and discussion among students and their communities. Stickers: Designed for placement in classrooms and personal belongings to act as constant prompts for tobacco-free behavior.

The combination of educational efforts, tangible takeaways, and engaging activities made the programme both impactful and memorable, fostering a lasting commitment to tobacco-free living among participants.

7. Outcomes and Impact

The tobacco sensitization programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, yielded significant outcomes, aligning with its objectives of raising awareness and promoting a tobacco-free lifestyle among students and the broader school community.

The programme originally planned to sensitize approximately 200 students from Junior Secondary School 1 to 3 (ages 11–14), along with several teachers and administrative staff. However, school authority pleaded that we accommodate the senior class of additional 365 students. This wide participation ensured the dissemination of the anti-tobacco message to a substantial audience, with potential ripple effects reaching families and the larger community. In total, the programme catered for 565 students of Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti. A major achievement was the establishment of the "No Tobacco" Club (NOTOB Club), which provides a structured platform for sustained advocacy. The club aims to:

- Promote peer-to-peer education on the dangers of tobacco use.
- Organize regular awareness campaigns within and outside the school.
- Collaborate with local organizations to expand the tobacco-free message.
- Integrate healthy activities, such as sports and creative competitions, to reinforce the anti-tobacco agenda.

Feedback from participants highlighted the program's success:

- Students: Many expressed gratitude for the interactive sessions and the introduction of baseball as a fun and healthy activity. A Junior Secondary School student

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

remarked, *"I have learned how harmful tobacco is to our health, and I will never use it. I will also tell my friends and family about the dangers of tobacco exposure."*

- Teachers: Praised the initiative's comprehensive approach. One teacher noted, *"This programme not only educated the students but also provided us with valuable health consultations and practical tools to promote a healthy school environment."*

Immediate and Long-Term Anticipated Impacts

- Immediate Impact: Participants gained essential knowledge about the risks of tobacco use and were motivated to adopt tobacco-free lifestyles. The programme fostered a sense of responsibility among students to advocate for healthier behaviors within their peer groups.
- Long-Term Impact: By creating the NOTOB Club, the initiative is expected to sustain awareness and advocacy efforts, instilling lifelong health-conscious habits. The program also lays the groundwork for reducing the prevalence of tobacco use and its associated diseases in the community.

8. Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Delays in securing funding and resources for materials like customized t-shirts and educational materials.
- Coordination with the school to finalize the event date while avoiding academic disruptions for the period of the programme.
- Recruiting and training the 25 medical student volunteers during their clinical posting to assist in the one-day programme.

9. Results from the data from the questionnaire

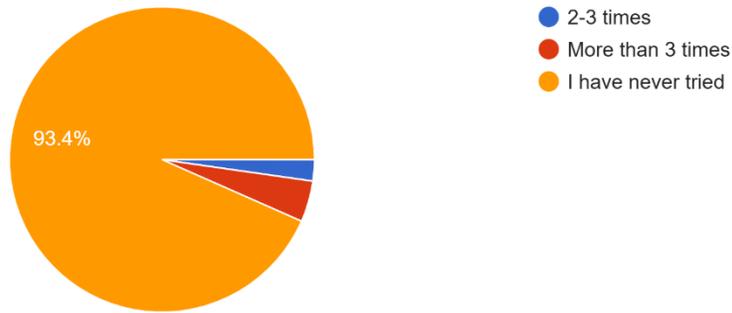
A total of 529 students completed the questionnaire with a male preponderance of 82.4%. The age range of the respondents was between 9 and 18 years and the junior class constituted 37.8% of the respondents. About 7 percent of the participants currently use tobacco and the majority are

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

willing to quit tobacco use.

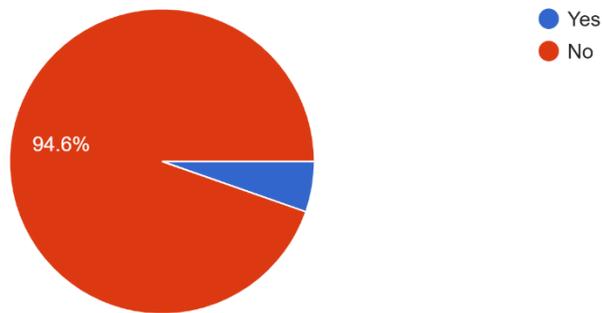
How many times have you tried smoking or using tobacco products in the last 30 days?

529 responses



During the past 30 days, did any of your friends or family members offer you a cigarette?

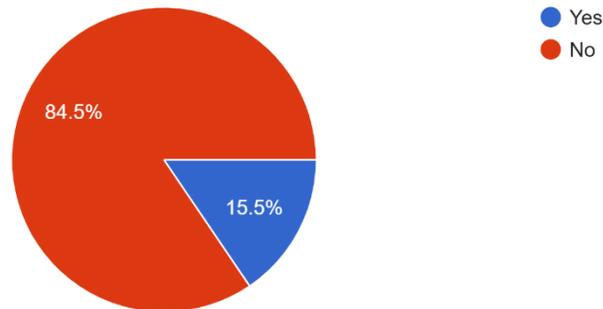
523 responses



Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

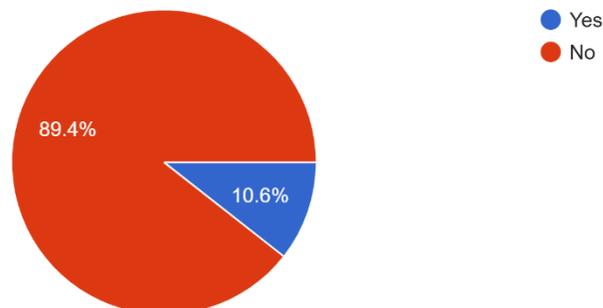
Do you stay around people when they smoke or use tobacco products (secondhand smoke)?

529 responses



Have you ever felt pressure from your friends to try smoking or using tobacco?

529 responses



10. Conclusion

The tobacco sensitization programme successfully met its objectives, aligning seamlessly with the goals of the World Lung Day. By engaging students who are under-14 students and the health education section was extended to the senior students in Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. The initiative effectively raised awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use and emphasized preventive measures. Key activities, including interactive lectures, a structured tobacco Survey-based questionnaire, and a softball match, fostered active participation and reinforced the no-tobacco message.

This programme not only advanced public health education in the local community but also showcased the impact of youth-targeted interventions in preventing tobacco use.

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Through this initiative, the vision of the PALI 2024 Award—to promote World lung health and prevent tobacco use in Africa—was brought to life.

Further outreach efforts to amplify through professional networks and platforms such as LinkedIn, PATS, NTS, and World Baseball Association.

Social media presence:

www.linkedin.com/in/adekunle-adeoti-4bb30520

11. Appendices

- Photos from the event.

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria



Picture with the students of Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti

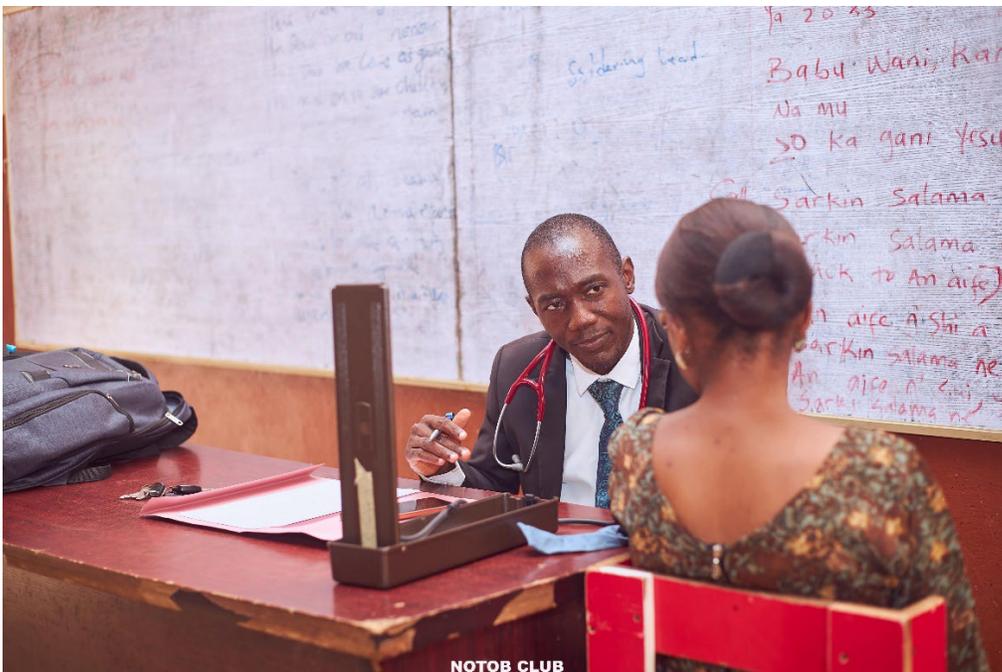


Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Interactive section during the health talk



One of the volunteers interacting with the students



Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Health consultation with the Teachers

- Samples of distributed materials (posters, T-shirts, etc.).



Six hundred customized pens for all the students



POWERED by Pan African Thoracic Society
NoToB Club

Six hundred stickers

Report on Tobacco Use Sensitization Programme at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria



Two hundred T-shirts for the Junior Secondary School Students and Volunteers

- Testimonials or quotes from participants.

A Junior Secondary School student remarked, *“I have learned how harmful tobacco is to our health, and I will never use it. I will also tell my friends and family about the dangers of tobacco exposure.”*

Teachers: Praised the initiative’s comprehensive approach. One teacher noted, *“This programme not only educated the students but also provided us with valuable health consultations and practical tools to promote a healthy school environment.”*