



Smoking Among Girls Rising Worldwide

August 15, 2007

News Summary

In many countries teenage girls are smoking at nearly the same rate as teenage boys, according to a report unveiled at the 12th World Conference on Tobacco.

The [Associated Press](#) reported Aug. 14 that in more than half of the 150 countries studied, smoking rates among 13- to 15-year-old males and females were essentially the same. That includes the U.S., where about 18 percent of boys and girls smoke. Only in the eastern Mediterranean do boys still smoke significantly more than girls, which was once the norm almost everywhere.

“Programs specific to gender must be developed which emphasize the serious health consequences of tobacco use,” said Charles Warren of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Overall, boys worldwide still smoke more than girls, but aggressive marketing to young girls is blamed for the narrowing gender gap.

“Transnational tobacco companies continue to identify women and girls in developing countries, and particularly in Asia, as a vast untapped market,” the report said.

Winston De La Haye, M.D., M.P.H., D.M.

Lecturer and Consultant Psychiatrist

Department of Community Health & Psychiatry,

The University of the West Indies, Mona, JAMAICA

"To prevent disease, to relieve suffering and to heal the sick - this is our work." - Sir William Osler.