
Chewing Pan Masala and/or Betel Quid–Fashionable Attributes and/or Cancer Menaces?

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KEYWORDS Pan Masala. Betel Quid. Smokeless Tobacco. Oral Sub-mucous Fibrosis

ABSTRACT Use of tobacco and tobacco-related products has unfortunately pervaded the ordinary household from being only occasional fashionable attributes to chronic potential toxicants thereby compromising immensely the health of the consumers especially more so since the synergistic action of nicotine with other drugs, drink and chemical usage has been observed. Rather than curbing their usage, the statutory warnings are ignored even among those who are sentimentally religious. The results of the present study highlight the addiction to betel quid, pan masala and their nicotine-containing products in urban areas of Punjab where this socio-cultural habit was almost absent and rather frowned upon as far back as only the last decade. The upsurge towards this commemorates the image-driven life-styles from the media and promotional campaigns via showbiz and sports events. The onset of oral sub-mucous fibrosis (OSF) and cancer of the oral cavity are among the major fatal sequels to their usage and India already has the dubious rank of being globally first in this. Eliminating the use of pan and pan masala through control programmes and public education can go a long way in reducing the incidence of oral cancer.

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