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For additional information email: director@iips.net, gatsindia@iips.net
GATS India Objectives

Tobacco use is a major preventable cause of premature death and disease worldwide. Nearly one million people die in India every year due to tobacco use. A systematic surveillance mechanism to monitor the tobacco epidemic is a key strategy to tobacco control.

Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) is a standardized mechanism for systematically monitoring adult tobacco use and tracking key tobacco control indicators. GATS India is a nationally representative household survey, among population age 15 and above, designed to produce internationally comparable data on tobacco use and tobacco control measures using a standardized methodology. GATS India was conducted in all the 29 States and 2 Union Territories of Chandigarh and Puducherry covering about 99.9 percent of the total population of India according to the 2001 Census. The major objectives of the survey were to obtain estimates of prevalence of tobacco use (smoking and smokeless tobacco), exposure to secondhand smoke, cessation, economics, media and knowledge, attitudes and perceptions towards tobacco use. The data for GATS India was collected from August 2009 to January 2010.

GATS India Methodology

A nationally representative probability sample was used to provide estimates for the urban and rural areas of the six regions of the country by gender. GATS India was the first nationwide survey in which electronic handheld machines were used for data collection and management. The estimates are based on 69,296 completed interviews of males and females with an overall response rate of 91.8 percent.

GATS India Highlights

- Current tobacco use in any form: 34.6% of adults; 47.9% of males and 20.3% of females
- Current tobacco smokers: 14.0% of adults; 24.3% of males and 2.9% of females
- Current cigarette smokers: 5.7% of adults; 10.3% of males and 0.8% of females
- Current bidi smokers: 9.2% of adults; 16.0% of males and 1.9% of females
- Current users of smokeless tobacco: 25.9% of adults; 32.9% of males and 18.4% of females
- Among daily tobacco users, 60.2% consumed tobacco within half an hour of waking up
- Average age at initiation of tobacco use was 17.8 with 25.8% of females starting tobacco use before the age of 15
- Among minors (age 15-17), 9.6% consumed tobacco in some form and most of them were able to purchase tobacco products
- Five in ten current smokers (46.6%) and users of smokeless tobacco (45.2%) planned to quit or at least thought of quitting
- Among smokers and users of smokeless tobacco who visited a health care provider, 46.3% of smokers and 26.7% of users of smokeless tobacco were advised to quit by a health care provider
- About five in ten adults (52.3%) were exposed to second-hand smoke at home and 29.0% at public places (mainly in public transport and restaurants)
- About two in three adults (64.5%) noticed advertisement or promotion of tobacco products
- Three in five current tobacco users (61.1%) noticed the health warning on tobacco packages and one in three current tobacco users (31.5%) thought of quitting tobacco because of the warning label