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To explore the characteristics of hardcore smokers among Taiwanese male adults: A qualitative studyHui-Wen Huang¹ and Chih-Ling Huang²¹Chung Hwa University of Medical Technology, Taiwan²Chang Jung Christian University, Taiwan

Background: Hardcore smokers are less open to cessation interventions and have been deemed an intractable public health problem. In Taiwan, there is a lack of consensus in the literature about the prevalence of and factors associated with hardcore smokers. This lack of empirical support for understanding hardcore smokers precludes evidence-based tobacco control interventions.

Aim: To explore the characteristics of hardcore smokers using qualitative methods in the Chinese context.

Methods: In this qualitative study, 29 hardcore smokers recruited from a hospital in southern Taiwan were assessed using a semi-structure interview. Content analysis involved categorizing the qualitative responses to each question.

Results: Four main themes (and ten related subthemes) were identified from the data: Perspectives on physiological and psychological dependence; social interaction and cultural norms; quitting motivation; and smoke-free policy.

Conclusion & Discussion: Hardcore smokers had three characteristics; nicotine dependence, social interaction through smoking and negative attitude toward smoke-free policy which were similar to those of non-hardcore smokers. The major difference was a lack of motivation to quit. Because most hardcore smokers knew that smoking is detrimental to their health, they did not want to quit smoking. The Taiwanese government could develop and implement effective cessation interventions to decrease tobacco-attributable morbidity and mortality among hardcore smokers.

Implications for Nursing and Health Policy: This study emphasized the importance of increasing self-efficacy and reduction of cigarette consumption by considering the characteristics of hardcore smokers; there is a need to develop effective smoking cessation services for hardcore smokers within a national policy. Further educational and training programs for quitting smoking that are tailored to hardcore smokers are needed. This would help nurses' better implement smoking cessation intervention.

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