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Literature review on tobacco smoking in Poland from 1960 to 2020. Bibliographic summary

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The tobacco epidemic is a constant threat and a challenge for public health worldwide. The aim of the presented review was to prepare a bibliographic analysis of literature on tobacco smoking in Poland from 1960 to 2020 and to present a comprehensive summary of available literature on the topic.

Material and methods: We have undertaken a comprehensive electronic literature search of articles published between 1960 and 2020. Firstly, the PubMed and Web of Science databases were used to generate relevant publications. All articles with the terms “tobacco” or “cigarette” and “smoking” and “Poland” published in English or Polish language were included in the literature collection process. Moreover, we employed a search from Polish resources (mainly Główna Biblioteka Lekarska – GBL). Finally, to expand the generated literature a hand search was undertaken to collect publications available only in paper form, especially those published in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Results: A total of 230 articles were included in the final analysis. The data collected included primary research articles (original papers, reviews), as well as other research documentation such as survey commentary reports, materials from conferences, and statistical reports. Records of smoking history and various analyses of its effects in Poland had been collected from the year 1960 to 2020.

Conclusions: Poland is one of the few countries that has closely monitored the prevalence of tobacco smoking in the population since the 1960s. The presented literature review gives a unique insight into patterns and trends of smoking over the years.

KEY WORDS: tobacco smoking, Poland, bibliographic summary.

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INTRODUCTION

The tobacco epidemic is a constant threat and a challenge for public health worldwide. It is estimated that tobacco smoking is responsible for about 8 million deaths annually, with approximately 1 million deaths being due to second-hand exposure to tobacco smoke [1]. Besides alcohol consumption, tobacco smoking is one of the most important behavioural factors shaping the health of the Polish population. Poland has been monitoring the prevalence of tobacco smoking in the population since the 1960s. This makes Poland a very

interesting subject to study in order to analyse attitudes and behaviours towards tobacco smoking over the decades. In 1976 in Poland, approximately 10.5 million adult men (a shocking percentage of 73%) were current smokers [2–4]. Until 1990 the prevalence of tobacco smoking in men decreased.

The aim of the presented review was to prepare a bibliographic analysis of literature on tobacco smoking in Poland from 1960 to 2020 and to present a comprehensive summary of available literature on the topic. This substantial collection of data can serve as a base for

many interesting kinds of research not only in the science field but also in economics, sociology, politics, and other social sciences.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to extract all the relevant articles available since 1960, a comprehensive electronic literature search was undertaken. The area of focus for the articles was an overview of smoking behaviour in youths and adults in Poland. Firstly, the PubMed and Web of Science databases were used to generate relevant publications. Thus, all articles with the terms “tobacco” or “cigarette” and “smoking” and “Poland” published in English or Polish language were included in the literature collection process. However, there were a limited number of articles generated from this search. One of the reasons might be that our area of interest is quite niche, and researchers who are interested in such discoveries are Poles, so a lot of the literature might not be translated into English. Therefore, we employed a search from Polish resources, in order to increase the bibliography. The main source thus became the Polish Medical Library (*Główna Biblioteka Lekarska* – GBL). Finally, to expand the generated literature a hand search was undertaken to collect publications available only in paper form, especially those published in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

RESULTS

Taken together, the PubMed, Web of Science, GBL, and Internet searches were undertaken to collect all the relevant literature about smoking behaviours in Poland. A total of 230 articles were included in the final analysis. The full list of the collected literature is presented in Supplement 1.

The data collected included primary research articles (original papers, reviews), as well as other research documentation such as survey commentary reports, materials from conferences, and statistical reports. Records of smoking history and various analyses of its effects in Poland had been collected from the year 1960 to 2020. Between 1960 and 2000, the main source of data on Poles’ smoking habits came from the oldest research institute in Poland – the Public Opinion Research Centre (*Ośrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej* – OBOP). There had been 18 reports released over the years with the highest frequency released between 1994 and 2000 (a total of 11 reports).

After Poland joined the EU in 2004, few independent research groups had published data on smoking behaviours in Poland. These include the Multi-centre National Population Health Examination Survey (WOBASZ), Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS), Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), Polish-Norwegian Study (PONS), Prospective Urban Rural Epidemiology study (PURE), and European Regulatory Science on Tobacco: Policy implementation to reduce lung diseases (EUREST-PLUS). Most of these studies analysed were conducted on relatively

large samples of the population. In total, 60 publications had been collected, with the first data published from the WOBASZ study in 2005. Finally, 6 reports from the World Health Organisation (WHO) were recorded. The publications were quite consistent, appearing in the years: 1994, 2004, 2009 (two publications appeared that year), 2010, and 2017.

In summary, many records on Poles’ smoking behaviour had been collected over the last 6 decades. The OBOP was responsible for reports from studies conducted annually since 1974. Additionally, since the beginning of the 2000s, many additional studies had been published. The source of records on smoking behaviours was more diversified. Moreover, WHO data contributed to the diversity of the statistical data. Finally, the increase in the number and diversity of publications over the years might be explained by the increasing awareness of smoking health problems. The literature collected regarding smoking behaviour among Poles had been reported by various authors. Most of the researchers who contributed to this wide collection of data on smoking in Poland are Polish researchers, with the leading researchers being Witold Zatoński and Krzysztof Przewoźniak. However, there are also publications of international research groups as well as collaborative works between Polish and international scientists.

Taken together, the data on smoking behaviour in Poland had been widely discussed over the last decades. The interest in the field was probably attributed to Poland’s phenomenal history of tobacco consumption. In the 1980s it was one of the countries with the highest number of smokers, while after the 1990s Poles started to quit smoking on a massive scale, contributing to the astonishing decrease in smokers and leading to Poland having one of the most dynamic declines of smokers in the world [4].

CONCLUSIONS

Poland was one of the few countries closely monitoring the prevalence of tobacco smoking in the population since the 1960s. In the presented review, we conducted a comprehensive search of the literature on tobacco smoking prevalence in Poland. The manuscripts were drafted from both international and national databases.

The attitudes toward tobacco smoking changed dramatically in Poland over the years. The number of current smokers decreased since the 1970s [4]. There is an urgent need for further systematic and extensive monitoring of smoking prevalence, with a consistent protocol, because some of the national, regular surveys have been discontinued.

A presented literature review gives a unique insight into patterns and trends of smoking over the years.

DISCLOSURE

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION:

KPZ made substantial contributions to conception and design, literature search, and drafting the manuscript. KZ made substantial contributions to revising the manuscript critically for important intellectual content. KJK made substantial contributions to drafting and revising the manuscript. ZS made contributions to literature search and drafting the manuscript. ABR made contributions to literature search. WZ made substantial contributions to conception and design and was involved in revising the manuscript critically for important intellectual content; manuscript guarantor.

Supplement 1. Literature on tobacco smoking in Poland – reference list

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