

Waterpipes: how much do we know about them?

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Narguilé: o que sabemos?

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The increase of waterpipe use is due, mainly, to the fact that it is considered less harmful than the traditional cigarette. Because waterpipe has a strong component of socialization, the youths are more susceptible to its use^{1,2}.

Nonetheless, what it is observed, is a huge misconception about waterpipe and the implication of inhaling its vapors, regardless of the use or not of tobacco. Therefore, the relevance of the recent publication of the National Institute of Cancer José Alencar Gomes da Silva (INCA) - *Waterpipes: how much do we know about them?*

The book, a result of a partnership between the Pan American Health Organization, the World Health Organization and INCA gathered scientific evidences about waterpipe and organized them in 15 chapters.

The first chapter introduces the reader to the history of waterpipe worldwide and the emerging of the belief that the passage of the smoke through a compartment with water would make its use less harmful because the water would function as a filter.

Next, the book describes the result of studies conducted in Brazil and in the world about the prevalence of the use of waterpipe. It stands out in Brazil the data of the Ministry of Health that indicate a rise of 139% in the proportion of waterpipe smokers males from 18 to 24 years between 2008 and 2013.

As for the factors that influence the experimentation of waterpipe – chapter 3 – the argument is that the additives added to tobacco to enhance aroma and flavors, make it more appealing mainly among youths. Further, it addresses the use of waterpipe for socialization, given its high social acceptance and for being considered a fun, gratifying and thrilling practice.

About the current knowledge about waterpipe, the publication emphasizes the importance of disclosing data about its damages. It also indicates the paucity of information about the standard of use and addiction and offers a model of questionnaire that, upon being adjusted to the local reality, will grant the construction of a scenario about the use of waterpipe.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the engineering and components of waterpipe, providing information for the required vigilance and appropriate use of the device.

Specifically, the description of the methodologies utilized in the studies about the topography of inhaling the cigarette smoke and of the waterpipe presented in chapter 7 is extremely important to evaluate the effects of its use. Considering, for instance the study about the topography of the inhaling, it was possible to verify that, during a one-hour waterpipe smoking, the smoker inhales the smoke of approximately 100 cigarettes.

The comparison of the waterpipe with cigarette continues in the next chapters with the didactic and thorough presentation to the reader of the differences noticed in the chemical composition and concentration of substances. It were presented results of studies that investigated the differences between waterpipe with tobacco and traditional cigarette and between waterpipe with and without tobacco.

The conviction that the use of tobacco-free waterpipe is a healthy option was misleading because of the results presented. Although nicotine has not been encountered in the essences without tobacco, the other toxic substances were found in similar or even higher concentrations than tobacco.

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The book also addresses the strategies of the tobacco industry to reach the tobacco-free waterpipe users. However, as chapter 10 points out, its use consists in inhaling also the substances released by charcoal when burned. Therefore, the user continues exposing itself to health damaging substances even without using tobacco.

In the next chapter, it is discussed the effect of these substances on passive smokers, evidencing the potential health risks while aspiring the waterpipe smoke. Very important evaluation, most of all because of the socializing characteristic waterpipe has.

Chapters 12 and 13 address, respectively, nicotine addiction in waterpipe users and treatment of the addicted. The results of the studies indicate significant risks at the onset of nicotine addiction in users. Considering the appeal the youths feel for waterpipe, this theme deserves attention and investment in further studies.

A publication of that relevance and with this subject could not fail to address the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and consequently, the regulation of waterpipe in Brazil.

WHO FCTC is an important milestone for tobacco control in Brazil and in the world. Among the articles of WHO FCTC, it stands out chapter 10 that discusses the necessity of disclosing information about the toxic components of the products containing tobacco.

The publication focused in sharing the several aspects involving the use of waterpipe and mainly to demystify the harmless appearance many attempt to attribute to it and this is expanding this practice quite substantially. And furthermore, it makes it explicit the challenge of ruling waterpipe in Brazil. The challenges of elaborating policies capable of addressing the safety specifications of each component of the device are very well presented, the substances that can be used and places where to use.

Likewise, specific recommendations are presented to the reader about waterpipe based in WHO FCTC and the existing legislation in the country; thus, they can be implemented immediately, like, for instance, the prohibition of images, symbols or any strategies aimed to promote misleading propaganda, which relates waterpipe to anything natural or less health damaging.

The authors gathered several studies about the theme and managed, in addition to supporting the discussion with scientific evidences, to demonstrate that waterpipe is a world problem. Although many aspects still need more studies, the growing use, mainly among youths, needs to be coped with because there are evidences of serious health damages.

Certainly, *Waterpipe: how much we know about them?* is an invaluable publication for health caregivers, managers and scholars about the harmful effects of tobacco in the human organism.

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