



“A Woman is not Supposed To Smoke”: Exploring Gendered Stereotypes in Smoking Patterns in a Nigerian Setting

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ABSTRACT This study explored the reasons behind the difference in the smoking behaviour of males and females in southern Nigerian communities using a mixed method approach. Twenty-seven participants were interviewed, and the modified Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) questionnaire was administered to 550 youth aged 18-24 years. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Chi-square and independent t-test were used to analyse qualitative and quantitative data respectively. The findings showed that southern Nigerian communities are more tolerant of male smokers than female smokers. This tolerance is not influenced by the gender of the respondent. Traditionally, males are to be provided cigarettes and other tobacco products during some traditional ceremonies thereby strengthening the ‘male identity’ associated with cigarette smoking. Tobacco control strategies should take cognisance of the traditional and societal trends of cigarette smoking in relation to gender. None the less, similar studies should be carried out to confirm if these findings are applicable to other settings since the gender disparity in cigarette smoking is widespread in most regions of the world.