

The Puffers & The Tolerants

(Part 2 of 4)

In Part I of *Information International's* smoking habits survey (Issue 31), the profile of Lebanese smokers was studied. Part II deals with those that identified themselves as smokers—or half of the sample.

Carrying own cigarette pack

Based on the responses, 80.7% of smokers carry their own pack. Results reveal that males are more likely to carry their own packs (87.2% of males carry their own pack) than females (71.3% of females carry their own pack).

Smoking per Day

A 1999 World Health Organization (WHO) study indicated that average monthly consumption per adult smoker in Lebanon was 243 cigarettes, equivalent to eight cigarettes per day. According to *Information International's* study, more than 50% of respondents smoke between half a pack (10 cigarettes) and one pack (20 cigarettes) on average, per day (see Graph 1).

In general, males also smoke more than females in all the categories. A noteworthy 41.3% of the males who stated that they smoke half a pack per day are 15-24 year-olds and 34.8% are 25-34 year-olds. (See Graph 2)

Smoking trends

The study reveals that 28.8% of the respondents had their first cigarette when they were under the age of 18 and 9% started to smoke regularly when they were under 18. In line with those figures, critics contend tobacco advertisements seem to be increasingly targeting teenagers. Accordingly, Philip Morris Companies Inc. has stated that “it is important to know as much as possible about teenage smoking patterns and attitudes. Today’s teenager is tomorrow’s potential customer, and the overwhelming majority of smokers first begin to smoke while still in their teens... The smoking patterns of teenagers are particularly important to Philip Morris.” By the same token, the smoking habits

of teenagers should be studied in order to raise awareness about the hazards of smoking. The majority of the respondents (77.4%) have been smoking for more than 3 years. A substantial number of 15-24 year-olds (39.7%) disclosed that they have been smoking for more than 3 years.

According to the WHO, “worldwide, more people are smoking, and smokers are smoking more cigarettes.” While 41.6% of the sample indicate that they are smoking about the same, 25.3% say they are smoking more this year than they were the previous year. Most 15-24 year-olds are smoking the same (50% as last year). On the other hand, 32.1% state that they are smoking more and only 12.8% of this age group say that they are smoking less this year (see Graph 3).

What has led to this increase in consumption? Respondents highlight “stress” as the main reason (63.1%). The other reasons given were “I feel the need to smoke more” (21.4%), “I’m around smokers more” (13.1%) and the rest were “don’t know”.

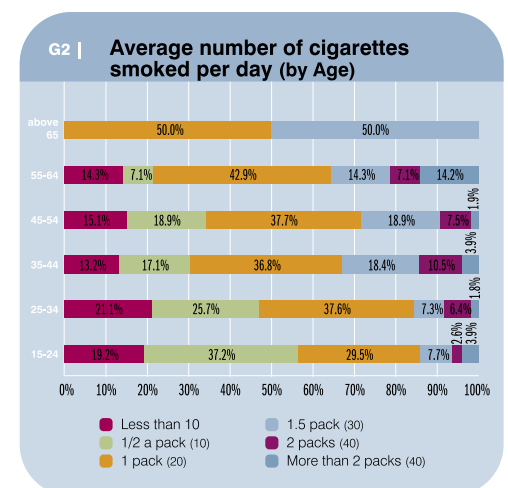
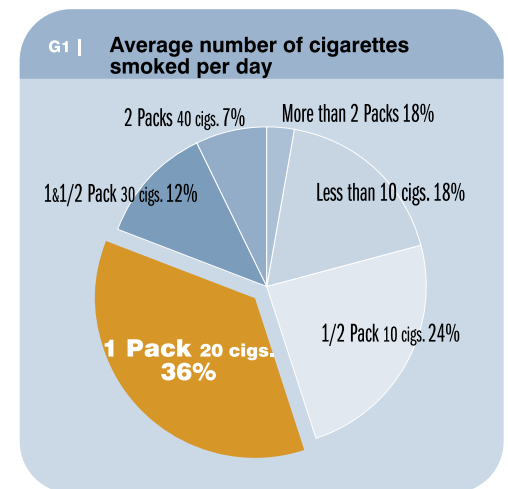
The majority smoke most when they go out (57.2%). As shown in Graph 4, the percentage of respondents who smoke at home increases with age, while those within the younger age bracket, 15-24, are more likely to smoke when going out (5.1% smoke at home, while 67.9% smoke when going out).

Effects of smoking on others

Most of the respondents (49.1%) indicated that they would not smoke less if the people around them were not smoking, compared with 32.2% who said they would. Graph 5 shows that, in general, female smokers are more conscious of those around them. Within all age groups, a higher percentage of women said they smoke less if the people around them do not smoke. However, a lower percentage of 25-34 year-old

females are mindful of those around them (15-20% less than females in other age groups). Moreover, the majority of females aged 25-34 smoke only when they are around others who smoke (60%). As shown in Graph 6 however, in other age groups, males are more likely than females to only smoke when those around them are smoking.

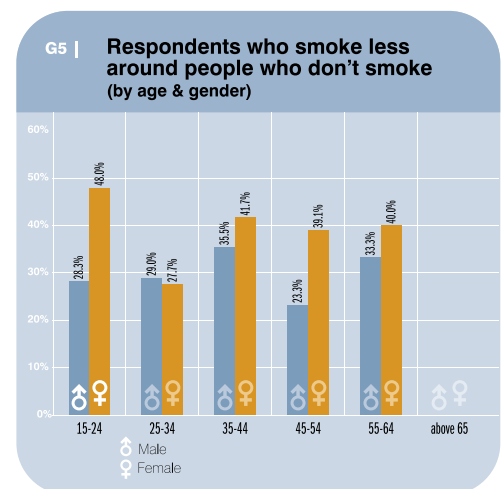
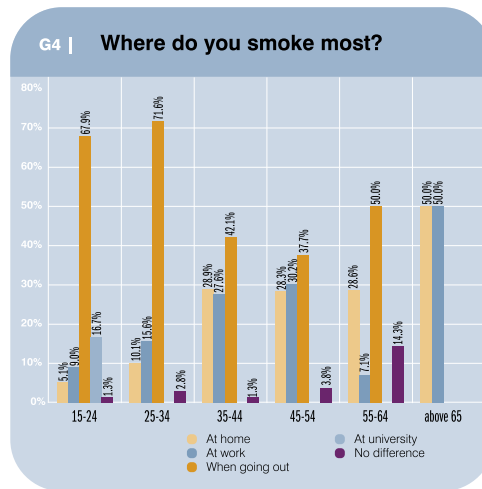
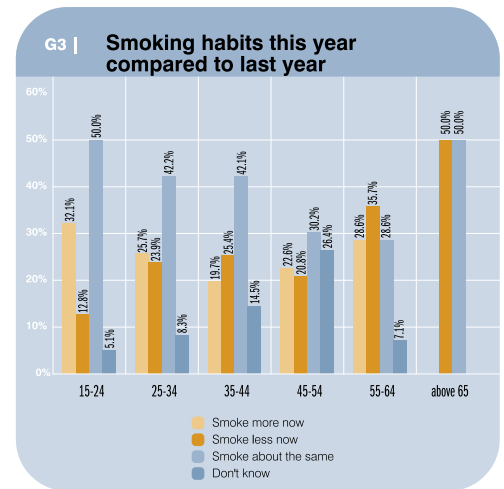
Out of respondents who carry their own pack, the majority (89.5%) indicate that they buy their own cigarettes. Moreover, 85.2% buy cigarettes by the pack and 64.3% of them buy packs because it helps limit their cigarette intake.



Forty percent and 44.4% of males in the 35-44 and 55-64 age bracket, respectively, state that they smoke out of habit. This is somewhat mirrored by females within the same age brackets, at 44.4% and 40% respectively. On the other hand, 38.3% of females aged between 25 and 34 say that that they smoke to fit in. This is in line with the finding that 60% of females within that age group only smoke when people are smoking. Hence, females within this age group seem to be very impressionable.

Graph 7 depicts the smoking habits of respondents in different situations. From the results, it can be deduced that people tend to smoke more when in social gatherings, especially when socializing with friends, at parties or at clubs/bars. Moreover, the results highlight the importance of the morning cup of coffee and cigarette ritual to most respondents.

The next issue of Ii Monthly will address which brands are most popular with smokers, smokers' brand loyalty, why they are loyal and how they choose the brands they smoke.



Sample & Methodology

This survey, based on a stratified random sample of 600 respondents in the Greater Beirut area, was conducted between 14 and 26 October 2004.

The survey had a margin of error of $\pm 1.9\%$.

Respondents' gender distribution was 50% males & 50% females, while age distribution was as follows:

26.2% between 15-24 years, 31% between 25-34 years, 21.8% between 35-44 years, 15.5% between 45-54 years, 4.5% between 55-64 years, & 1% above the age of 65.

