

## **The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)**

### **On the eve of World Day to Stop Smoking, May 31, the PCBS issues a press release about the prevalence of smoking in the Palestinian Territory**

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) describe the prevalence of smoking in the Palestinian society on the eve of World Day to Stop Smoking, in a press release issued on May 31, 2009. PCBS presents the most significant data pinpointing smoking prevalence in the Palestinian society. In the press release, the PCBS drew attention to its concern with the significance of the occasion, consistent with the PCBS dissemination policy. It is interested in highlighting health issues by making available the official figures and statistics that planners and policy makers need regarding all topics about the health situation in the Palestinian Territory.

#### **Wide gap between male and female smokers**

According to 2006 data, the rate of smoking among persons aged 12 years and over was 19.8%, of which 37.0% males and 2.2% females.

#### **Smokers' rates increase with age**

The 2006 data show that smoking is more prevalent among individuals aged 30 and above compared to those aged 12-30 years at 27.0% and 14.0% respectively. Data also show that 3.0% of individuals aged 12 and above were previous smokers who quit smoking and 77.0% have never smoked.

#### **4.0% of smokers are aged 10-18 years**

According to 2006 data, 4.0% of smokers are within the age group of 10-18 years including 7.3% males and 0.6% female smokers. The rate is higher among West Bank children in comparison with Gaza Strip children at 5.3% and 2.1% respectively.

#### **5.0% of smokers who are enrolled in education are in basic and secondary stages**

The data from 2006 show that approximately 5.0% of smokers who are attending school are in basic and secondary education stages, of which 8.8% males and 0.7% females. Data also show that the rate of smokers in secondary education stages totaled 12.5%, of which 24.5% for males and 1.1% for females. The prevalence rate of smoking among pupils in basic stages of education reached 1.9%, at 3.5% for males and 0.6% for females.

#### **Smoking begins at an early age**

According to 2006 data, 17.6% of unmarried youth aged 15-29 years are smokers. The median age upon starting smoking among those aged 15-29 years begins at the age of 16. Data indicated that 26.1% of those smokers started smoking between 10 and 14 years of age while 61.2% said that they had started smoking when they were

between 15 and 19 years of age. On the other hand, 1.5% of those smokers started smoking before turning 10 years of age.

**Imitating friends and curiosity are the most prominent incentives for smoking among the youth**

According to data, 44.0% of young smokers started smoking as a result of pressure from friends or as a result of imitating friends. Data also show that a similar rate of youth started smoking because of curiosity. Conversely, 13.2% of the young smokers from Gaza Strip said that psychological and family problems had made them smoke compared to 7.0% of the young West Bank smokers who started smoking for similar reasons.

**4.9% of total household expenditure goes to smoking**

According to the data of the Household Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2008, the median household monthly expenditure on smoking is 33.6 JD (4.9% out of total expenditure) at 42.1 JD in the West Bank and 16.7 JD in Gaza Strip. On the other hand, data showed that the total value of Palestinian imports of tobacco reached almost US\$ 56 million during the year 2008.