



# Predictors of smoking cessation during pregnancy among the women of Yamato and Ayase municipalities in Japan

J. Suzuki<sup>a,\*</sup>, H. Kikuma<sup>b</sup>, K. Kawaminami<sup>c</sup>, M. Shima<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Kamakura Health and Welfare Centre, 2-16-13 Yuigahama Kamakura, Kanagawa 248-0014, Japan

<sup>b</sup>Atsugi Health and Welfare Centre, Kanagawa, Japan

<sup>c</sup>Department of Public Health Administration and Policy, National Institute of Public Health, Japan

<sup>d</sup>Department of Public Health, Hyogo College of Medicine, Japan

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## KEYWORDS

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**Summary** Cigarette smoking during pregnancy affects the unborn fetus. This study aimed to investigate: (1) the smoking status of pregnant women before, during and after pregnancy in the Yamato and Ayase municipalities, Kanagawa, Japan; (2) the characteristics that differentiate successful spontaneous smoking quitters from continuous smokers during pregnancy; and (3) the awareness of risks of smoking that may influence smoking cessation during pregnancy. A community-based, cross-sectional survey of 420 postpartum women, who delivered their babies from July 2002 to October 2002, was performed.

Out of 420 respondents, 275 (65.4%) did not smoke before and during pregnancy. Of the 145 women who smoked before pregnancy, 101 (69.3%) quit successfully while pregnant. Smoking prevalence during pregnancy was 10.4%. Out of 101 successful quitters during pregnancy, 22 (21.8%) women resumed smoking after childbirth. A multiple regression analysis showed that the independent predictors of smoking cessation during pregnancy were primiparous women and women living with non-smokers in the household. Although maternal age predicted smoking cessation in a simple regression analysis, this predictive value was lost in the multiple analysis. A simple analysis showed no significant association between the awareness of smoking risks and smoking cessation during pregnancy.

It is suggested that Japanese smokers are more likely to quit while pregnant than women in other countries. In the future, smoking cessation programmes should be designed to help multiparous women and women living with smokers to give up smoking.

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\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +81 467 24 3900; fax: +81 467 24 4379.

E-mail address: suzuki.mtcc@pref.kanagawa.jp (J. Suzuki).

## Introduction

Cigarette smoking during pregnancy affects the unborn fetus. Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of spontaneous abortion, premature delivery, perinatal death and intra-uterine growth retardation. A relationship between maternal smoking and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) has been established, and children whose parents smoke have more respiratory infections.<sup>1</sup>

Yamato Health and Welfare Centre is a branch office of the Kanagawa Prefecture Office, Japan, which administers the region comprising both Yamato and Ayase municipalities. In February 2002, a regional health and medical programme was established to stress the importance of disease prevention. The programme suggested that public awareness of the importance of smoking cessation during pregnancy should be promoted, since no smoking cessation programme has been performed in the region. For the purpose of promoting the programme effectively and efficiently, public health professionals must identify the current smoking status during pregnancy in the region. As little information is available with regard to the prevalence of smoking among pregnant Japanese women, we need to examine these data in order to compare them with those of other countries.

Lu et al. reviewed nine cohort studies and found that the determinants of smoking and its cessation in pregnant women include maternal age, number of cigarettes smoked and duration of smoking, partners' smoking habit, socio-economic status, level of education, age at smoking onset, level of addiction, parity and passive smoke exposure.<sup>2</sup> It was thought important to look into the characteristics of women who quit during pregnancy to see if they differ from the characteristics of those who smoke continuously.

Furthermore, it was reported that despite awareness of the dangers of smoking, the prevalence of smoking among pregnant women remains very high after the first antenatal visit.<sup>3</sup> We also need to investigate whether the awareness of risks among pregnant women may change their smoking behaviour.

The aims of this study were to investigate: (1) smoking status among pregnant women before, during and after pregnancy in the region; (2) the characteristics that differentiate successful spontaneous smoking quitters from continuous smokers during pregnancy; and (3) the awareness of the risks of smoking that may influence smoking cessation during pregnancy.

## Methods

A community-based cross-sectional survey of postpartum women was conducted. The women were recruited into the study from all the mothers ( $n=615$ ) in both Yamato and Ayase municipalities who delivered their infants from July 2002 to October 2002. All neonates in both municipalities were supposed to be taken to the medical centres in each municipality for routine medical check-ups when they were 3 or 4 months old. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to all of the mothers by mail before the check-up. If a mother consented to respond to the questionnaire, it was returned at the check-up, 3-4 months postpartum. These medical check-ups were provided from October 2002 to December 2002. During pregnancy and after delivery, no intervention designed to encourage quitting or support cessation efforts had been made by public health professionals.

Through the questionnaire, information was collected retrospectively regarding mothers' characteristics such as maternal age, smoking history, parity and the smoking status of those they live with. Mothers were also asked whether they had experienced abnormal symptoms during pregnancy, and whether they had received any care or assistance from their husbands or family. In addition, information on the awareness of risks of smoking among the women during pregnancy was obtained. No special verification to confirm maternal smoking status during pregnancy was performed.

Smokers were defined as those women who reported having smoked during pregnancy. Unsuccessful quitters were defined as those women who reported having stopped smoking temporarily, but resumed at some time during pregnancy. In this study, the definition of smokers includes a group of unsuccessful quitters. Successful quitters were defined as those who reportedly had smoked before pregnancy but who quit smoking successfully and spontaneously at any time during pregnancy. Non-smokers were considered as those who reportedly had not smoked before and during pregnancy. Relapsed smokers were those who reportedly were successful spontaneous quitters during pregnancy but who restarted smoking after delivery by the time of the medical check-up for their infants.

Questionnaires were distributed to 615 women; 443 (72.0%) agreed to the study and filled out the questionnaire. One hundred and seventy-two (28.0%) women did not attend the check-up on their own. Twenty-three women were excluded because they did not fill out the major questions

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