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Sheesha smoking “fashionable” for Qatari girls - study

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By [Claire Ferris-Lay](#)

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(Picture for illustration purposes only)

Sheesha smoking is becoming increasingly fashionable amongst young Qatari women as they look for alternatives to smoking cigarettes, a new study has found.

Smoking, traditionally considered culturally taboo and socially unacceptable by older women in the Gulf state, is becoming more socially acceptable amongst younger national women, according a poll on lifestyle and health choices by the University of Calgary-Qatar.

“Participants also observed that even though smoking is a culturally taboo and socially unacceptable behaviour, the younger Qatari generation thinks differently,” the report said.

“They noticed that water-pipe [sheesha] smoking is emerging as a fashionable mode of tobacco use in Qatar, especially among young girls. There is an assumption that for these individuals, smoking sheesha is more acceptable than smoking cigarettes,” it added.



Poor diet choices coupled with lack of exercise and a highly sedentary lifestyle are all contributing to the rapidly growing rate of lifestyle diseases amongst GCC nationals. The World Health Organisation predicts that the number of diabetes patients in the MENA region will reach 51.7 million by 2030.

Socio-cultural factors play a key role in Qatari women’s decisions to participate in healthy lifestyles choices, said the study, which found just 40 percent of local women regularly exercise.

“Our study highlighted the importance of considering cultural, social and religious factors when developing strategies to promote healthy lifestyle in Qatar. Any educational, health promotion and disease prevention programs developed without considering these factors are likely to be less effective,” Dr. Tam Truong Donnelly of the University of Calgary-Qatar, said in a statement.

Qatari nationals are at a high risk of ischemic strokes due to hypertension, diabetes mellitus, hypercholesterolemia, and smoking, noted the report.

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