Abstract

Background: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the attitudes and behavior of surgeons regarding preoperative smoking cessation.

Methods: A total of 109 anonymous questionnaires were distributed to non-vascular surgeons in our hospital, inquiring about their smoking attitudes, their smoking cessation advice practices, whether they appreciated the benefits of preoperative smoking cessation, and their knowledge of smoking cessation methods.

Results: Eighty questionnaires (from 51 resident doctors and 29 academic staff) were returned (response rate: 73.40%). Of the surgeons, 17.50% were current smokers. Although 40% of the surgeons surveyed believed that preoperative smoking cessation reduces postoperative complications, 31.2% of the surgeons (25/63) had given smoking cessation advice at least to 1 patient in the last month. Most of the resident doctors (39.2%) advised smoking cessation within a month; prior to surgery however, the academic staff (27.6%) advised cessation immediately before the operation (p=0.038). There was a significant difference between academic staff and resident doctors concerning the method to increase a patient's chance of quitting (p=0.045), even among current smokers (p=0.049).

Conclusion: The surgeons who participated in the questionnaire were aware that smoking cessation improves outcome, but most of them did not appreciate that providing brief advice, referring to cessation services, or prescribing nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) may be of benefit in helping patients to quit. It is necessary to educate surgeons about the scale of the benefit and the efficacy of smoking cessation interventions or to set up systematic frameworks to offer smoking cessation advice to preoperative patients who smoke. Hippokratia 2012; 16 (2): 124-129.

Key words: preoperative smoking cessation, postoperative complications, surgeons, smoking cessation methods