Determinants of heavy cigarette smoking: are there differences in men and women? Results from the population-based MONICA/KORA Augsburg surveys.

Abstract:
Heavy cigarette smoking is more frequent in men than in women. So far, little is known whether this sex-specific difference in cigarette consumption is modified by age at smoking onset, sociodemographical, and lifestyle factors. Therefore, we aimed to identify sex-specific characteristics associated with heavy daily cigarette smoking. The study population consisted of 3,178 daily smokers aged 25-74 years from the population-based MONICA/KORA Augsburg surveys conducted between 1984 and 1995. Subjects consuming at least 20 cigarettes daily were defined as heavy smokers. Multivariate logistic regression was used to identify sociodemographical, smoking-related, and lifestyle characteristics of heavy smokers. A number of 1,576 subjects (49.6%) were identified as heavy smokers. Men were significantly more often heavy smokers than women with the exception of those women who have started smoking at an early age. Multivariate logistic regression revealed early age at smoking onset determines heavy smoking in women but not in men. While younger age at study examination and low educational level was associated with heavy smoking in men only, current employment was associated with heavy smoking in women only. Moreover, living alone, high alcohol or coffee consumption, and low physical
leisure activity were associated with heavy smoking behavior in both sexes. Survey, obesity and parental history of smoking showed no association with heavy smoking. The present study revealed sex-specific differences in heavy smoking by age at smoking onset, which was not shown before so far. These findings should be further investigated and addressed in future prevention campaigns.