



Effectiveness of a Faith-Based approach to Help Somali Immigrant Smokers to Quit

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Outline

- Introduction
- Background and Approach
- Evaluation Results
- Lessons Learned

Somali Culture

- **Somali immigrants are refugees who fled civil war beginning in 1991**
- **Minnesota is home to the largest Somali population in US**
- **Largest concentration in Minneapolis**
- **Most Somali are devout Muslims**



Smoking in the Somali Community

- **Low level of knowledge and understanding about the harm of tobacco**
- **Smoking is a social activity for Somali men**
- **It is a taboo for women to smoke**
- **Khat, a common stimulant drug enhances nicotine use**
- **Less than 2% have ever tried Nicotine Replacement Therapy (patch, gum, lozenges)**



Faya-Bilow Program

“A Healthy Beginning”

- **Funded in 2004**
- **Initial community education to work with elders and community leaders**
- **Curriculum adapted from *Pathways to Freedom***
- **4 group sessions, 2 hours per session**
- **One male and one female counselor**
- **Free NRT access through Helpline or clinics**
- **Family and friends of smoker are encouraged to attend**
- **Incorporates Islamic messages, outreach to mosques**

Proverb

“Sigaar quite, qoomameeyn doonee”

A tobacco user regrets at the end.



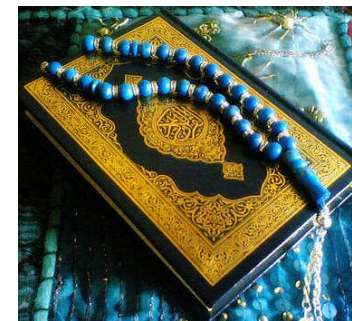
Incorporating Islam to Help Smokers Quit

- Islam plays a central role in Somali life
- Provide information at the mosques
- Work with Imams, the religious leaders, to educate the community and promote the program



Islamic Messages Against Tobacco

- Passages from the Qur'aan and the authentic Sunnah teach against harmful substances.
Examples:
 - *Smoking is a Killer*; Allah forbids us from killing ourselves
 - *Smoking burns (wastes) health*; and Allah says: “But spend not wastefully (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the devils.”



Islamic Messages

- ***Smoking inflicts harm on non-smokers; The Messenger of Allah said: “There should be neither harming, nor reciprocating harm.”***
- ***Smoking causes the spread of sin and evil; Muslims who smoke set a bad example and encourage children and others to smoke.***
- ***Smoking affects worship; Smokers may dislike fasting and sitting in Islamic study circles because of constant cravings for cigarettes.***



Important Islamic Events

- Ramadan
 - Month of fasting
 - Must refrain from eating, drinking, smoking from dawn until sunset
 - Many smokers quit during this time
- Eid (Eid)
 - Celebration marking the end of Ramadan

Evaluation goals

- Determine the extent to which program components were used
- Ascertain the level of participant satisfaction
- Assess tobacco cessation outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Obtaining quality data was challenging
 - Social desirability bias
 - Hesitancy in sharing truthful information with counselors from the community
 - Significant staff turnover
 - Taboo issue, difficult to reach women

Evaluation Results of Participants

- Participants served 2007-2009: 125
- Male: 75%
- 45 – 54 years: 41%
- Married: 78.5%
- Immigrated to US 2000-2004: 67.3%
- 66% reported smoking within 30 minutes of waking up
- 52.4% had tried to quit before

Evaluation of Tobacco Outcomes

- 90-day Follow-up - 100% response rate
- 75.2% of respondents reported being tobacco-free within the last 7 days at 90 day follow-up
 - Intention to treat rate: 63.7%
- Of those still smoking:
 - Mean daily smoking reduced by 65% from 14 to 4 cigarettes
 - 74% reported an increase in confidence to quit
 - 41% planned to quit within 30 days

Evaluation Results

- 17% of participants used Nicotine Replacement Therapy
- 71% attended 3 sessions, 29% attended all 4 sessions
- Participant satisfaction:
 - 93% were comfortable with their counselor
 - 80% of respondents found the four sessions useful
 - Mean participant rating of the quality of the counselors: 3.5 (scale of 1 – 4)

Evaluation Successes

- Grantee's capacity to use and conduct evaluation increased
- The quality of the data improved over time due to counselors' improved evaluation capacities and the incorporation of evaluation lessons learned from previous cycles
- The ongoing technical assistance and support were essential in building evaluation capacity

A Healthier Community

- Faya-Bilow program “*A Healthy Beginning*” for a healthier tomorrow.



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Thank you!