

DESCRIPTION OF ARECA NUT USE IN A CORDILLERAN COMMUNITY

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Research Question: What are the factors associated with the use of areca nut in Poitan, Banaue, Ifugao?

Materials and Methods: This is a qualitative study conducted in Poitan, Banaue, Ifugao among constituents using areca nut for at least a year. Data were gathered through Key Informant Interviews, Focused Group Discussions, and Survey. Demographic data were described by mean and standard deviations for normally distributed continuous variables and frequencies and percentages for categorical variables. For tests of association, Pearson Chi Square was used for nominal variables and Pearson Correlation was used for continuous variables. Data were analyzed using SPSS 17.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA) and $P < 0.05$ was considered significant.

Results: There were 200 subjects, 60% males and 40% females. Majority of the subjects were aged 18 and above. 14% of the population had signs and symptoms of dependence to areca nut. Physical symptoms associated with areca nut use were bodily warmth, discoloration of teeth and gums, treatment of parasitism, sweating, aiding in digestion, facial flushing, decreased salivation, and hunger suppression. Psychological symptoms associated with areca nut use were eased boredom, uneasiness on discontinuation, craving, increasing use throughout time, sense of well-being, poor concentration on discontinuation, happiness, craving during pregnancy, irritability on discontinuation, and mood swings on discontinuation. There was a positive correlation

between age and number of physical symptoms. There was also a positive association between age and signs and symptoms of dependence.

Conclusions:

Areca nut was used by adolescents and adults in the Cordilleran community. Areca nut had been observed to cause physical symptoms, with possible medicinal benefits, and psychological symptoms which included sense of well-being, tolerance, craving, and withdrawal symptoms. Increasing age was associated with signs and symptoms of dependence to areca nut and correlated with the number of physical symptoms.