

Development and Evaluation of a Smoking Cessation Programme for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women

Project Objective

Tobacco dependence remains a significant public health challenge both globally and in Türkiye, continuing to function as a preventable risk factor for a wide range of diseases. While its adverse effects are felt across all age groups, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers are among the populations at heightened risk from tobacco-related harm. This study aims to examine the prevalence of tobacco and tobacco product use among pregnant and breastfeeding women – including their exposure to secondhand and thirdhand smoke – and to support smoking cessation among those who currently use tobacco products.

Scope

The project is structured across three phases. The first phase focuses on determining the prevalence of tobacco use among women; the second involves implementing a behavioural intervention programme to promote cessation among current smokers; and the third delivers capacity-building training to healthcare professionals working in relevant clinical settings.

In the first phase, a multi-centre screening study will be conducted across several high-birth-rate institutions in Istanbul that occupy a central position in the delivery of health services. This will generate robust, representative prevalence data, addressing a significant gap in the existing literature and constituting the distinctive scientific contribution of the project.

The second phase entails the development of a structured, behaviourally-informed intervention programme specifically designed for pregnant and breastfeeding women – a population for whom pharmacotherapeutic options are markedly limited. The implementation of a structured hybrid psychosocial programme, incorporating both group sessions and individual counselling, is expected to serve as one of the first systematic, field-applicable models of this kind targeting this demographic in Türkiye.

The final phase is designed to initiate a sustainable field practice through capacity-building training for healthcare professionals working with pregnant and breastfeeding women in

the context of tobacco control.

Expected Outcomes

- A culturally adapted, structured smoking cessation intervention programme will be developed, giving full consideration to the biopsychosocial needs specific to pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- The effectiveness of the programme will be rigorously evaluated through pre-test and post-test comparisons of smoking cessation rates, relapse frequency, and nicotine dependence levels, with statistically significant differences expected across intervention groups.
- A standardised implementation package — including training materials and counselling algorithms — will be produced for application by general practitioners, midwives, and nurses at the primary care level.
- The findings will provide an evidence base for the Ministry of Health and relevant institutions to support the integration of outcomes into maternal and child health and tobacco control policies.

VISUAL CONTENT

