**A Comparative Analysis Examining the Correlations Between Gender and Socio-Economic Status and Smoking Rates among ultra-Orthodox and non-ultra-Orthodox in Israel**

**Abstract**

Background: Smoking is less prevalent among the ultra-Orthodox in Israel than among non-ultra-Orthodox society. Smoking is more prevalent among groups with low socioeconomic status around the world.

Methodology: This cross-sectional study is based on data on the residents of two, bordering, central Israeli towns: one ultra-Orthodox and the other non-ultra-Orthodox. The data, received from Maccabi Healthcare Services (MHS), which serves about half of the residents of both towns, included variables for 11,509 residents of the ultra-Orthodox town and for 18,891 residents of the non-ultra-Orthodox town, aged 50 and over.

Results: After adjusting for age, gender and socioeconomic status, the rate of smoking among the residents of the ultra-Orthodox town was found to be comparatively lower (OR=0.25, 95%; CI=0.22, 0.28) than the rate for the non-ultra-Orthodox town.

After adjusting for age and gender, lower rates of smoking were found among residents of the ultra-Orthodox town with a lower socioeconomic status (OR=0.61, 95%; CI=0.51, 0.73) compared with residents with a higher socioeconomic status. On the contrary, in the non-ultra-Orthodox town, higher rates of smoking were found among residents with a lower socioeconomic status (OR=1.63, 95%; CI=1.47, 1.81).

A larger disparity in the smoking habits of men versus women was found among the residents of the ultra-Orthodox town (17.5% vs 6.1%) compared to the non-ultra-Orthodox town (27.5% vs. 23.3%).

Conclusions: Religiosity is a social-cultural factor that may be associated with different aspects of smoking.

Socioeconomic status and smoking rates may correlate differently for different populations in the same country, which highlights the necessity of further research.