



## ASH Scotland Types of tobacco used in some minority ethnic groups May 2008

- **Paan, pan masala, betel quid, areca nuts**  
These can be bought or made at home. Lime paste (calcium hydroxide) is smeared onto a betel leaf. The betel leaf is folded into a funnel shape and tobacco, areca nut and other ingredients are added. The top of the funnel is folded over, resulting in a 'quid', which is placed between cheek and teeth for gentle chewing and sucking. Chewing betel-quid can cause a range of cancers even when it is chewed without tobacco.<sup>i</sup>
- **Gutkha**  
Tobacco and betel nut are mixed together with a variety of ingredients including lime paste (calcium hydroxide), breath fresheners and herbs, flavours and sweeteners. It is often packaged to look like sweets, and doctors in India (which already has 58% of the world's oral cancer cases<sup>ii</sup>) are linking a rise in pre-cancerous lesions in the mouth to gutkha.<sup>iii</sup>
- **Beedies, bidis or biris**  
Hand-rolled, flavoured tobacco cigarettes imported from India. They are made by wrapping tobacco flakes in a tendu or temburni leaf, tying them with a coloured string and adding flavours such as chocolate, vanilla, cinnamon, mango, strawberry etc. They are smaller and cheaper than commercial cigarettes but typically have no filter. The leaves used to wrap the tobacco are not porous so smokers have to inhale more often and more deeply to keep the bidi lit. Studies in India have shown that this leads to larger amounts of tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide in the lungs than when a commercial cigarette is smoked, leading to more deeply-seated cancers<sup>iv</sup>.
- **Hookah, water pipe, nargeela/arghileh/nargile, shisha/sheesha, okka, kalyan, ghelyoon or Ghalyan, or hubble-bubble**  
The hookah operates by water-filtration and indirect heat. Hookahs consists of a flexible tube with a container of water at one end and a mouthpiece at the other. Above the container of water is a bowl with a filter (sometimes just a piece of perforated tinfoil) where charcoal and scented tobacco are placed. Scented tobacco is crumbled into the bowl of the hookah and often water flavoured with fruit juice or milk is added. Drawing on the mouthpiece pulls the smoke down the stem of the tube, through the water, the tube and the mouthpiece into the lungs. Compared to a single cigarette, 45 minutes of water pipe use approximately doubles carbon monoxide and triples nicotine exposure, with near equivalent effects on cardiovascular response<sup>v</sup>. It is a common misconception that the water filters out impurities. Smoking hookahs poses many health risks including: air-borne tuberculosis (TB) transmission, hepatitis A, Helicobacter pylori and pulmonary aspergillosis from pipe sharing, cancer, coronary heart disease, respiratory disease and exposure to heavy metals<sup>vi</sup>.

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<sup>i</sup> IARC Monographs Programme finds betel-quid and areca-nut chewing carcinogenic to humans. World Health Organisation media release 7 August 2003. [www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2003/priarc/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2003/priarc/en/index.html) [Online] [accessed 30.4.08]

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iii</sup> BBC online news, 'Children buy cancerous sweets', 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1999. Online: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/289976.stm> [accessed 30.4.08]

<sup>iv</sup> Gottlieb, N. Indian cigarettes gain popularity but don't let the flavour fool you. *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, Vol. 91, No. 21, 1806-1807, November 3, 1999. <http://jnci.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/91/21/1806> [accessed 30.4.08]

<sup>v</sup> Maziak W, et al. Tobacco smoking using a waterpipe: a re-emerging strain in a global epidemic. *Tobacco Control* 2004 Dec;13(4):327-33. Available online: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15564614?dopt=Abstract](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15564614?dopt=Abstract) [accessed 30.04.08]

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid.

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