

Tobacco

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Language Undefined
Common Risk Factors

Tobacco: a threat that cannot be ignored

The health and economic costs of tobacco are devastating to the world. The single greatest preventable cause of death in the world today, tobacco kills 5.4 million people a year. If left unchecked, that number will increase to more than 8 million a year by 2030.

Tobacco kills many people at the height of their productivity depriving families of their breadwinners, and nations of a healthy workforce. Tobacco also contributes to the cycle of poverty: many studies have shown that in the poorest households in some low-income countries as much as 10 percent of total household expenditure is on tobacco, which means less money is spent on basic items such as food, education, and health care.

The challenge of non-communicable diseases

Alongside the other major modifiable risk factors, tobacco is a significant cause of the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that pose a major challenge to development in the 21st century. According to the recently released World Economic Forum's 2010 Global Risks report, NCDs could cost the world in excess of a trillion US dollars per year.

A legally binding global response to tobacco

The world has an evidence-based tool to address the global tobacco epidemic: the world's first public health treaty, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). 168 countries are now Parties to the FCTC, representing more than 86 percent of the world's population. Parties to the treaty commit to implementing an evidence-based and highly cost-effective set of strategies to reduce tobacco consumption, including:

- - Tobacco tax and price increases
- - Smoke-free environments in all public and workplaces
- - Bans on all direct forms of tobacco advertising
- - Public education including large pictorial health warning labels on tobacco packages
- - Prohibition against deceptive labels such as "low" and "light"
- - Prohibition against the sale of tobacco products to minors
- - Regulation of the content of tobacco products

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