

Girls and Adolescents

Half of all NCDs that present in adulthood – including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease – begin early in life, and many behaviours that underlie common NCDs start during adolescence. Children and adolescents living with NCDs or caring for family members with these conditions often reach lower levels of educational attainment and have poorer access to employment opportunities than those without these responsibilities. To maximise adolescents' and girls' opportunities, the NCD epidemic must be addressed.

CERVICAL CANCER

The WHO recommends the HPV vaccine for girls aged 9-13 years to protect against high-risk types of human papilloma virus (HPV) and future risk of cervical cancer as an adult.



OBESITY and PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Obesity now affects 20–40% of adolescents worldwide, and young people are increasingly at risk for type 2 diabetes. Currently, more than **80% of the world's adolescent population does not meet physical activity recommendations**. Engaging in physical activity has significant health benefits, including the promotion of mental health and reduced risks of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

DIABETES

Type 1 diabetes often presents during childhood or adolescence. Effective management of the disease requires consistent access to insulin and blood glucose measuring devices. Ensuring the affordability and availability of these commodities is essential for effective long-term care.



TOBACCO USE

90% of adult smokers begin before 18 years of age. **Globally, between 80,000 and 100,000 young people start smoking every day**. In some countries, adolescent smoking is more common now than ever before, with more **young girls starting to smoke than boys**.



CHRONIC ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE

Adolescents who start drinking alcohol before 15 years of age are five times more likely to abuse alcohol as adults than those who start drinking at age 19 or older.



MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Globally, between 10-20% of children and adolescents experience a mental health issue. By age 20, one in four young people will have suffered from at least one.

Suicide is the leading cause of death for adolescent girls aged 15 to 19.

Key risk factors include barriers to health care access, discrimination, trauma, abuse, violence, relationship conflict, and social isolation. Improved understanding of adolescents' psychosocial development can decrease the stigma associated with mental health issues.



A CALL
TO ACTION

WOMEN and Noncommunicable Diseases

Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) – including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and mental and neurological conditions – are the leading causes of death and disability among women in developing and developed countries. Tackling NCDs is central to achieving our global development goals and targets, and to ensuring gender equity, socio-economic well-being and healthy lives for all.

WE CALL for the **INTEGRATION OF NCD prevention, treatment and control** into existing health programmes and services for HIV/AIDS and along the entire RMNCAH continuum.

WE ADVOCATE for **UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC)**, along with **comprehensive programmes** to address the social determinants of health, to ensure improved health and development outcomes for women and girls of all ages.

WE ADVOCATE for a **GENDER-BASED APPROACH** to **NCD prevention and control**, to ensure health programmes, policies and systems are refined and strengthened to be gender-responsive.



Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4

By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from NCDs through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being.

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