

Asia Pacific Heart Network Regional Plan

**ASIA PACIFIC
HEART
NETWORK**



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Asia-Pacific Heart Network

A regional tobacco control strategy for the Asia-Pacific cardiovascular community

Preamble

Tobacco use is causing unprecedented death and suffering among the people of the Asia-Pacific region. Left unchecked, the carnage caused by tobacco will grow at an alarming rate.

The Western Pacific region already has the world's highest tobacco use rates, with two-thirds of all men using tobacco. One-in-three cigarettes smoked are smoked in this region. Altogether, 3.6 trillion cigarettes are smoked in Asia each year.

Unless greater efforts are made to control and reduce tobacco use, death rates caused by consuming tobacco will surge.

There are, for example, an estimated 1.2m smoking deaths a year in China, mostly from heart disease, stroke, chronic lung disease and several cancers. This is projected to grow to 3.5m deaths a year by 2030.

This will have a devastating impact on the families and economies of all nations, but especially the many low-to-middle income nations in the region.

The good news is that the devastation caused by tobacco use can be reversed.

Tobacco use rates are in decline in some countries as a result of well funded, comprehensive tobacco control programs brought about by strong advocacy and determined governments.

But these are exceptions – not the rule.

Acknowledging the heavy impact tobacco use has on cardiovascular disease rates, heart and cardiac societies in the Asia-Pacific region must play a strong leadership role in tobacco control to help turn the tide on tobacco and the industry that presses its deadly products on our communities.

This regional tobacco control strategy for the Asia-Pacific cardiovascular community – especially heart and cardiac societies – was developed from the recommendations of a workshop convened in Singapore in March 2012 by the World Heart Federation, the Asia-Pacific Heart Network and Global Smokefree Partnerships.

Over-arching goal

A tobacco-free region where less than 5% of the population smokes by 2040.

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Asia-Pacific region advocacy priorities

Heart and cardiac societies in the Asia-Pacific region should work in partnership with other tobacco control groups to:

1. Ensure all Asia-Pacific countries are signatories to the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
2. Accelerate adoption and implementation of the provisions of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
3. Call for price increases for all tobacco products, through taxation policies, with the revenue to be used to help fund tobacco comprehensive control programs
4. Call for greater investment in sustained comprehensive public education campaigns and education programs about the dangers of tobacco consumption and its impact on health
5. Secure comprehensive smoke-free legislation for all workplaces, public places and public transport
6. Secure comprehensive legislation to eliminate all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship
7. Seek the introduction of graphic health warnings covering at least 50% of the tobacco pack, complemented by comprehensive public education campaigns that draw attention to the new health warnings followed by pursuit of plain packaging.

WHO Code of Practice for Health Professionals

Heart and cardiac societies in the Asia-Pacific region should endorse and implement the World Health Organization's 2004 Code of Practice for Health Professionals at

<http://www.who.int/tobacco/communications/events/codeofpractice/en/>, ensuring its simple and effective recommendations are embraced by all boards, committee, staff and members.

Identification, engagement of tobacco control champions

Heart and cardiac societies should seek to identify champions within their ranks, especially cardiologists and other health professionals that can advocate for tobacco control priorities at regional, national, sub-national and local levels.

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Working in partnerships

Heart and cardiac societies are encouraged to work collaboratively with other tobacco control groups at the regional, national, sub-national and local level. Tobacco control partnerships have proved highly effective in coordinating advocacy campaigns, sharing resources and achieving change. The World Health Organization with partners in the region has developed a regional tobacco control strategy that urgently needs the commitment of all partners in health.

HEART-TC: APHN's tobacco control network

The Asia-Pacific Heart Network will facilitate a tobacco control network, initially linking participants of the Singapore tobacco control workshop with other tobacco control advocates working with heart and cardiac societies throughout the region.

This will be done through email bulletins and the existing APHN website. This will share information and ideas, record and encourage achievement and identify barriers to progress.

Reporting and recording progress

Heart and cardiac societies in the region will be encouraged to keep each other informed of progress towards achieving the tobacco control priorities outlined in this strategy every six months.

A short, simple reporting template – to be lodged with the APHN - will be developed to facilitate information exchange, identify partnerships, report problems and acknowledge achievement.

The APHN will develop an annual report on progress towards achieving the over-arching goal, building on the six-month reports from member heart and cardiac societies.

Next steps

Heart and Cardiac Societies can start by reviewing their own strategic plans to ensure tobacco control goals, objectives and activities are adequately addressed to reverse the impact that tobacco use has on heart health. Forming a tobacco control working group can help to identify the priorities within different contexts including the need for societies to become role models by adopting a code of practice for heart health and tobacco control professionals.

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Summary

By working together through effective partnerships, great change can and must be achieved to help the people of the Asia-Pacific lead longer, healthier, more productive lives by helping to prevent the deaths and suffering caused by tobacco use.

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