



Every year on 31 May, the World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners observe World No Tobacco Day (WNTD), advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption. This year, WNTD draws attention to tobacco use as a leading risk factor for the development of lung diseases. One in five smokers will develop Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in their lifetime, and almost half of COPD deaths are attributable to smoking. In Bangladesh, estimated 10% of deaths are from chronic respiratory diseases; and tobacco smoking and second-hand smoke exposure are contributors to this. Deaths caused by tobacco-related respiratory disease are distressing, but even more distressing is the tremendous suffering caused by these illnesses, the debilitating effects of which affect the quality of life of people of all ages.

The implementation of evidence-based tobacco control policies will prevent the deaths and disabilities caused by tobacco. In Bangladesh, priority is to be given to increasing the price of tobacco through reform of the tax structure, which will save lives and generate extra revenue for health and development. Steps are to be taken to protect the tobacco control policies from tobacco industry interference in light of article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Also building the capacity to enforce the tobacco control law including smoke-free policy in public places and public transports are important, specially to protect non-smokers from tobacco smoke.

The data shows declining trend in prevalence of tobacco use in Bangladesh. However, the rate of decline is to be increased further to reach the target of a 30% relative reduction in prevalence of current tobacco use among adults by 2025. The initiatives taken by the Government of Bangladesh to reach this target is commendable, and WHO is proud to be a partner in this journey.

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