



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE
COPENHAGEN

EUR/ICP/ALDT 94 01/MT02(S)

03256

Original: English

EUR/HFA target 17

6 May 1996

SPORTS AND ARTS TOBACCO-FREE

Summary Report on the Fifth WHO Seminar for a Tobacco-free Europe

Warsaw, 26-28 October 1995

ABSTRACT

The fifth in a series of seminars on various aspects of the WHO Action Plan for a Tobacco-free Europe focused on how sports and the arts can help to create a smoke-free environment and promote a smoke-free culture. The participants also discussed the need for more effective legislation on tobacco in an effort to reduce smoking. Several examples were presented of successful experiences at the country level in holding sports and cultural events that conveyed a positive message about nonsmoking. The participants made several recommendations, among them that health advocates should strive for a complete ban on direct and indirect tobacco advertising and sponsorship by the tobacco industry of sports and the arts.



This report is issued in English, French, German and Russian, and all rights are reserved by the WHO Regional Office for Europe. The document may nevertheless be freely reviewed, abstracted, reproduced or translated into any other language, but not for sale or for use in conjunction with commercial purposes. The WHO name and emblem are protected and may not be used on any reproduction or translation of this document without permission. Any views expressed by named authors are solely the responsibility of those authors. The Regional Office would appreciate receiving three copies of any translation.

TARGET 17

TOBACCO, ALCOHOL AND PSYCHOACTIVE DRUGS

By the year 2000, the health-damaging consumption of dependence-producing substances such as alcohol, tobacco and psychoactive drugs should have been significantly reduced in all Member States.

Keywords

SMOKING – prevention & control
SPORTS
ART
ADVERTISING
EUROPE

Introduction

The Fifth WHO Seminar for a Tobacco-free Europe was held in Warsaw, Poland from 26 to 28 October 1995. The seminar was hosted in the Maria Skłodowska-Curie Cancer Centre and Institute of Oncology, Department of Cancer Control and Epidemiology, which is also a WHO collaborating centre for the Action Plan for a Tobacco-free Europe. The series of seminars was organized as part of the WHO Action Plan for a Tobacco-free Europe. The principal aim of the Plan is to encourage international and national public health advocates to initiate projects to promote tobacco-free environments. The seminars contribute to coordinating an international public health response by bringing together national civil servants, international scientists and advocates from leading nongovernmental organizations.

The seminar was attended by 83 participants from 44 countries and 22 organizations. Most participants were the national counterparts for tobacco control in their countries. The Polish Minister of Health and the chairman of the Polish Parliamentary Health Commission were present at the opening. They both acknowledged the importance of controlling tobacco use in order to reduce the high number of deaths related to smoking. They also referred to the tobacco control legislation that had been submitted to the Polish Senate and that was in its final stages of debate in the Parliament. They hoped that Poland would soon have a comprehensive tobacco control law.

The theme of the fifth seminar was "sports and arts tobacco-free". How can sports and arts help to create a smoke-free environment and promote a smoke-free culture and how do advertising and sponsorship by the tobacco industry influence sports and arts? These were some of the questions addressed during the seminar.

Discussion

Tobacco smoking is an important public health issue. It is responsible for 700 000 deaths in central and eastern European countries alone. Nearly every second premature death of a middle-aged man (35-69) and every tenth death of a middle-aged woman in central and eastern Europe is a result of tobacco smoking. The health for all target that 80% of all Europeans should be nonsmokers by the year 2000 is far from being achieved.

The countries of central and eastern Europe (CEE) have become the main targets for international tobacco industries because they view these countries as the best potential outlets. In the Czech Republic over 90% of the entire tobacco production lies with major international corporations and in Poland up to 50% of all the billboard and press advertisements are tobacco advertisements. In the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union (NIS) smoking prevalence is increasing, and there is no proper to-

bacco control legislation. Improvement in a nation's health is not possible without investment in tobacco control and health promotion. It is important for the NIS to build coalitions, introduce comprehensive legislative measures for tobacco control, prevent smoking among young people, support smokers to quit and coordinate tobacco control activities.

The current situation in the European Union (EU) calls for more action in tobacco control. The impact that EU legislation has is enormous as directives are binding on the member countries and a source of inspiration for those countries who want to join the EU. A ban on tobacco advertising in the EU would lead, within five years, to a ban on advertising in almost all of Europe. The list of EU legislative measures is impressive, but the impact of these measures is weakening every year as no new legislative proposals have been introduced since 1991. Tobacco production in EU member countries is heavily subsidized, and the tobacco industry by its ever increasing presence in Brussels is able to lobby effectively all decision-making bodies of the Union.

Smoking prevalence rates among young people are on the increase. Of particular concern is the fact that smoking among young girls seems to be increasing at a faster rate than among boys in many countries. Young people can become key actors in creating a smoke-free society and making nonsmoking the norm. The family has a great influence on young people's behaviour as do the media campaigns that sell ways of life to them.

The ever increasing tobacco use by women is also becoming a bigger public health concern than in the past. There is no single satisfactory explanation for gender differences in smoking since psychological, sociocultural and biological factors all seem to be involved. It is nevertheless evident that social and cultural tradition have an important role in the attitude and smoking behaviour of women. The tobacco industry has been targeting women much more vigorously ever since women started to gain economic and social power.

Sports and arts have been and are being used by the tobacco industry to promote smoking and tobacco use. It has been brilliantly successful in promoting and selling a product that kills. Surely it is possible to promote a message that keeps people alive instead? Experiences from different countries show that it is.

Country examples

The *Barcelona Smoke-free Olympics* was a good example of reinforcing the links between sports, non-smoking and health. It engaged sports organizations in an effort to promote a smoke-free society and to raise awareness of the threat posed by passive smoking and the importance of having smoke-free public places.

Watch sport without smoke is a joint initiative of the Norwegian Confederation of Sports and the

National Council on Tobacco as a follow-up to the Lillehammer smoke-free winter Olympics. The aim of the project is to reduce the number of people who use tobacco within the sports environment and to instil the attitude in everybody that sports and tobacco do not belong together.

In August 1995 Gothenburg, Sweden, hosted the world's First Smoke-free World Athletics Championship. The slogan for this international event was "Give one hundred percent!", which of course could be done only if one was not smoking. The Beauty Queen Miss Sweden 1994 has also been an active promoter of nonsmoking in her country.

"Smoke-free is the better way to be" is the motto of the tobacco control advocates of New Zealand. They have been carrying out successful initiatives and campaigns against smoking such as Lifespan smoke-free secondary school projects and Lifespan smoke-free sponsorship of selected sporting and cultural events, replacing previous tobacco sponsorship. Sporting role models are employed as full-time educators for young people.

CIPRET (Centre for Information on Smoking Prevention), Geneva, has been actively sponsoring sports and cultural events such as rock festivals for young people. In March 1994, the Swiss Association for the promotion of sport, culture and health was established. It will function in a similar manner to the Victorian Foundation in Australia.

The primary goal of tobacco sponsorship is to get on television. Similar methods can be used to counteract the industry's approach, for example "*Brand name ridicule*" employed by Doctors Ought to Care in the United States.

In the run-up to the World's Cup in 1982, the Ulster Cancer Foundation recruited the Northern Ireland World Cup squad to take part in an anti-smoking campaign aimed at young people. An evaluation has shown that such ventures contribute to health education in schools, that young people retain the significant messages of the campaign and that awareness is raised among them on the incompatibility of physical fitness and tobacco use.

Slovenia has been using Olympic champions as role models for their youth in smoking prevention. Their eldest representative is a 97-year-old non-smoker. They are starting a project called "*Life with sport and not with cigarette*". They hope to increase the number of nonsmokers in their country and instil the love of nature, sport and a healthy lifestyle in young people.

Advertising

Tobacco is the most heavily advertised consumer product in the world. The budget for advertising this deadly product far exceeds the health budget in many countries. It is very important that the issue of tobacco advertising remains in the public health arena,

despite the tobacco industry's attempt to shift the debate into the arena of trading restrictions or infringements, trademark protection or civil liberties. The aim should be a total ban on advertising but incremental changes or steps towards advertising restrictions would also be acceptable in the short term. It is vital to network with others around the world who have passed similar restrictions in order to avoid failure. In Canada, for example, the Tobacco Control Act of 1988 was regarded as a big success in introducing control measures. But it failed to achieve the results expected because tobacco use continued to be vigorously promoted through indirect advertising. Further, it was struck down by the Canadian Supreme Court in September 1995. This illustrates the care tobacco control advocates must take to ensure that legislation does not have any loopholes that can be exploited by the tobacco industry's lawyers.

The mass media can become a useful advocacy tool. It can generate a lot of free publicity, especially if an aggressive approach is used. It can be instrumental in winning politicians' support and secure commitment at a high level. It can help to form local alliances. However, it is not always easy to gain the support of the mass media since often they themselves are financed by the tobacco industry, which will exploit any opportunity that may arise from mistakes or misquotes. Any activity in which the mass media play a role should be planned well in advance.

Conclusions

1. Tobacco is the one preventable cause of death that continues to kill three million people every year in the world.
2. Tobacco use and its promotion is a growing concern in all the CCEE and NIS. Direct and indirect tobacco advertising is very common and powerful in most European countries and is growing to gigantic proportions in the CCEE and NIS. A lot of advertising is specially targeted to women and young people.
3. An EU directive totally banning tobacco advertising would be an effective tobacco control measure for all European countries.
4. Almost all sports have been sponsored by the tobacco industry at one time or the other. It is one of the most common forms of sponsorship. More and more art and cultural events are being sponsored by the tobacco industry as well.

Recommendations

1. All countries should have a smoke-free policy on sports and arts. Tobacco control advocates should build alliances and work in collaboration with organizations such as the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund and WHO as well as nongovernmental

organizations, ministries responsible for sports and arts, international and national sports and arts organizations and local authorities.

2. A nationwide coalition involving athletes, teachers, coaches, sporting authorities and Olympic committees should be formed in each country.

3. Health advocates should strive for a complete ban of direct and indirect tobacco advertising and sponsorship by the tobacco industry of sports and art events. The minister in charge of sports and arts should be contacted and encouraged to prohibit sports-marketing of tobacco.

4. A health and sports foundation should be formed in each country. Tobacco sponsorship can be substituted by creating a special health sponsorship foundation such as has been done in Australia and New Zealand using tobacco tax revenues. Sports receiving government subsidies should not be allowed to accept sponsorship from the tobacco industry. Funds for alternative sponsorship should be raised through the combined efforts of health and other supportive organizations.

5. Famous athletes, artists and actors should be encouraged to be nonsmoking role models for young people.

6. Sports teachers should be given special education. With their help annual smoke-free events could be organized. School-based physical education, arts and sports initiatives could be developed, implemented and monitored. Art contests for students and effective mass-media campaigns could be organized.

7. Special actions should be taken to reduce tobacco use among women and to prevent young people from starting the harmful habit. Heightened awareness of the health risks involved in using tobacco during pregnancy and the adverse effects smoke has on children's health can increase women's motivation to cease smoking. Women's magazines, organizations, beauty contests and trade unions should be involved as allies.

8. Attention should be given to increasing awareness about the dangers of passive smoking for children. Parents should be actively involved and encouraged to be role models.

9. To better evaluate the effects of tobacco programmes various sources of data should be combined, sampling should be carefully carried out using standard procedures, findings should be cross-validated, expected outcomes should be described in detail and data collection to document the trends should be carefully planned.