Harm Reduction in Asia: Challenges and the Way Forward

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Countries with the highest number of deaths from smoking

1. China (1.8 million)
2. India (743,000)
3. US (472,000)
4. Russia (283,000)
5. Indonesia (180,000)
6. Japan (166,000)
7. Bangladesh (153,000)
8. Brazil (149,000)
9. Germany (130,000)
10. Pakistan (124,000)

Six out of the 10 countries with the highest number of deaths from smoking are in Asia.

Source: GBD
Asia’s smoking addiction

Male smoking rate is high in Asian countries, with Indonesian men ranked the world’s top smokers as 76% of them smoke.

- **Indonesia**: 76%
- **Laos**: 57%
- **South Korea**: 50%
- **China**: 48%
- **Vietnam**: 47%
- **Cambodia**: 44%
- **Malaysia**: 43%
- **Philippines**: 43%
- **Pakistan**: 42%
- **Thailand**: 41%
- **Bangladesh**: 40%
- **Nepal**: 37%
- **Japan**: 34%
- **Myanmar**: 32%
- **Sri Lanka**: 28%
- **Singapore**: 28%
- **India**: 20%

Source: World Bank
Young adult current smoking trends
AU vs US vs UK

Up in smoke
Prevalence of smoking any tobacco product among males aged 15 years and over, %

Source: WHO
*Forecast

The Economist
REGULATIONS & LEGISLATION ON ENDS
India banned the production, import and sale of electronic cigarettes on Wednesday, a public health decision that will dash the expansion plans of companies such as Juul Labs and Philip Morris in the country.

The ban will be imposed through an executive order and will include jail terms of up to three years for offenders. It was not clear whether the use of such products would be prohibited.
KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters) - Malaysia is planning to introduce strict regulations on the sale and use of electronic cigarettes and vaporisers, health officials said on Tuesday, as countries around the world move to ban devices that have been linked to deaths and youth addiction.
South Korea considers banning e-cigarettes on health worries

More countries are pulling e-cigarettes from their markets and restricting advertising.

23 Oct 2019

South Korea's health ministry promised to tighten vaping product regulations such as strengthening customs procedures for importing liquids for e-cigarettes [File: Mike Blake/Reuters]
China Bans Online Sales of E-Cigarettes

Rachel Chang and Lisa Du
November 1, 2019, 1:45 AM PDT  Updated on November 1, 2019, 2:51 AM PDT

- China joins other nations in pushing back on e-cigarettes
- Mysterious lung disease linked to vaping has killed 37 people

China has banned online sales of e-cigarettes in the latest blow for the nascent vaping industry, which has come under intensifying scrutiny around the globe.

All websites and apps selling e-cigarettes should be shut down and all online marketing campaigns halted, according to a statement by the State Tobacco Monopoly Administration and State Administration for Market Regulation on Friday. The measures are aimed at protecting adolescents from vaping, it said.

The directive also ordered online shopping platforms to remove e-cigarette products from their sites. China’s e-cigarette market size rose from $451 million in 2016 to $718 million in 2018, according to estimates from L.E.K. Consulting, as lack of specific regulations on e-cigarettes allowed for their proliferation.
CHALLENGES
Six challenges for THR in Asia

1. Misinformed & misguided policy makers
2. Position of WHO on harm reduction
“Youth who have used e-cigarettes are more likely to become regular smokers. E-cigarettes do not represent a healthier alternative to cigarettes nor do they help people quit smoking”

Senior Parliamentary Secretary
Health & Home Affairs
Jan 27, 2019
“Everyone is entitled to his own opinion but not to his own facts”

Daniel Patrick Moynihan
US politician, sociologist & diplomat
(1927-2003)
“There is nothing a politician likes less than to be well informed - it makes decision making so much more complex and difficult.”

John Maynard Keynes
(1883-1946)
“Scientific findings do not fall on blank minds that get made up as a result. Science engages with busy minds that have strong views about how things are and ought to be”

Sir Michael Marmot
Chair,
WHO Commission on Social Determinants in Health
Given the scarcity and low quality of scientific evidence, it cannot be determined whether ENDS may help most smokers to quit or prevent them from doing so (FCTC/COP7/11).
### Key information and recommendations for countries

- ENDS should be carefully and clearly defined in the legislation in order that countries can regulate ENDS effectively.
- Countries often have the option of classifying ENDS as tobacco products. If this is possible then countries should ensure that existing tobacco control laws adequately protect people from the potential harms of ENDS.
- ENDS products may serve as a gateway to conventional smoking among young people or the renormalization of smoking in society.
- Countries should apply bans on advertising and flavouring of products to deter use by young people.
- Countries should consider introducing policies to force manufacturers to make products unattractive to young people in order to discourage uptake, such as plain packaging.

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**Why is this important?**
“Health bureaucrats and regulators in Latin America look at the WHO and the FDA like Catholic priests look at the Vatican, or like old time communist parties looked at the politburo of the Soviet Union”

Roberto A. Sussman
Institute of Nuclear Sciences
National Autonomous University of Mexico
Nicotine Policy Blog 8/8/2019
“….Though there is much to disagree with, there is also a reasonable attempt to recognize 'harm reduction' concepts and not treat them like witchcraft…”

Clive Bates,
The Counterfactual,
United Kingdom
Six challenges for THR in Asia

1. Misinformed & misguided policy makers
2. Position of WHO on harm reduction
3. Political & economic drivers
4. ‘Fear’ factor among potential beneficiaries and sympathizers
Half of the largest tobacco producing countries are in Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Production Quantity (MT)</th>
<th>Production Value (in $)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>China, mainland</td>
<td>3157000</td>
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State owned tobacco monopolies account for 40% of global cigarette production

Tobacco excise tax revenue in Indonesia in RpBn (1990-2008)

6% of total government revenue comes from tobacco

Vaping: 67 offenders nabbed since 2018's ban on e-vaporiser use
Six challenges for THR in Asia

1. Misinformed & misguided policy makers
2. Position of WHO on harm reduction
3. Political & economic drivers
4. ‘Fear’ factor among potential beneficiaries and sympathizers
5. Affordability of ENDS (e-cigarettes, HNB devices)
6. Lack of quality local research in LICs and LMICs due to scarce resources and limited capacity
A Randomized Trial of E-Cigarettes versus Nicotine-Replacement Therapy

Peter Hajek, Ph.D., Anna Phillips-Waller, B.Sc., Dunja Przulj, Ph.D., Francesca Pesola, Ph.D., Katie Myers Smith, D.Psych., Natalie Bisal, M.Sc., Jinshuo Li, M.Phil., Steve Parrott, M.Sc., Peter Sasieni, Ph.D., Lynne Dawkins, Ph.D., Louise Ross, Maciej Goniewicz, Ph.D., Pharm.D., Qi Wu, M.Sc., and Hayden J. McRobbie, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND
E-cigarettes are commonly used in attempts to stop smoking, but evidence is limited regarding their effectiveness as compared with that of nicotine products approved as smoking-cessation treatments.

METHODS
We randomly assigned adults attending U.K. National Health Service stop-smoking services to either nicotine-replacement products of their choice, including product combinations, provided for up to 3 months, or an e-cigarette starter pack (a second-generation refillable e-cigarette with one bottle of nicotine e-liquid [18 mg per milli-
Whether or not knowledge is global, the use of knowledge is always local.

Photo: UNICEF
WHAT NOW?
Five ways forward

1. Continue efforts to establish civil & constructive dialogue between key stakeholders, i.e. policy & decision makers, parliamentarians, scientists, health workforce, professional associations, community & religious leaders, smokers, industry/manufacturers, media, civil society, constitutional & legal experts (legal challenges/petitions)

2. More QUALITY local research & a good understanding of local contextual factors

3. More effective communication & advocacy based on less hubris on the part of us scientists
Komunitas Pecalang akan Minimalisir Asap Rokok di Kawasan Wisata Bali
LAKPESDAM NU: Produk Tembakau Alternatif Lebih Banyak Kebaikannya

Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia (Lakpesdam) Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU) menyosialisasikan hasil rekomendasi Munas Alim Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), yang dilaksanakan akhir Februari lalu, tentang produk tembakau alternatif kepada para pemangku kepentingan. Produk tembakau alternatif perlu mendapatkan dukungan dari semua pihak karena memberikan manfaat (kemaslahatan) kepada perokok dewasa.

Ketua Lakpesdam PBNU Rumadi Ahmad menjelaskan, produk tembakau alternatif merupakan hasil pengembangan dari inovasi teknologi di industri hasil tembakau (IHT). Produk ini, menurut riset ilmiah di negara maju, berpotensi mengurangi zat kimia berbahaya hingga 95 persen dibandingkan rokok konvensional.
Tobacco control communities

Harm reduction communities

The Solution?
Musyawarah
Less hubris on the part of us scientists....
Vaccines. It's not about sides: it's about the data and what the science teaches us.

Paul Offit, MD

Voices for Vaccines call, 14 January 2014
http://tinyurl.com/itsaboutdata
“We humans know more truths than any species on earth. Yet we also believe the most falsehoods”
Overcoming the risk of hubris....

1. As scientists we must stop taking the ‘high moral ground’ that science & evidence speaks for itself

2. We must be more pro-active & learn to communicate with more warmth & empathy, and with fewer statistics and with more stories

3. We must acknowledge the importance of personal autonomy as a foundation for effective policy, and the power and value of emphatic listening and true dialogue
Five ways forward

1. Continue efforts to establish civil & constructive dialogue between key stakeholders, i.e. policy & decision makers, parliamentarians, scientists, health workforce, community & religious leaders, smokers, industry/manufacturers, media, civil society, constitutional & legal experts (legal challenges & petitions)

2. More QUALITY local research and a good understanding of local contextual factors

3. More effective communication & advocacy; less hubris on the part of us scientists

4. Stronger links & collaboration between Asian scientists and the international harm reduction community (E-Cigarette Summit in Malaysia, July 2020)

5. Work with sympathetic governments to influence and change WHO’s position and stance on harm reduction
World Health Assembly, Geneva, May 2019
MISSION

The attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health
“The divorce of research and analysis from pragmatic efforts to remediate inequalities of access is a tactical and moral error - it may be an error that constitutes, in and of itself, a human rights abuse”

Paul Farmer  
US physician/anthropologist  
“Pathologies of Power”  
University of California Press, 2003
Thank You