

Tobacco and Cardiovascular Diseases: Are We on the Right Track?

Dear Editor,

The tobacco epidemic has been regarded as one of the largest public health threats, accounting for the deaths of more than 7 million people annually.^[1] It has been found that 86% of the reported deaths occur due to the direct tobacco use while the remaining deaths have been attributed to second-hand smoke.^[1] Furthermore, it has been reported that the majority of the smokers as well as the deaths are reported in middle and low income nations.^[1,2] However, it has even been reported that the outcomes of acute myocardial infarction is much better among smokers (smoker's paradox) than non-smokers, which is an argument to be considered by the public health specialists.^[3]

Furthermore, the average overall smoking rates have declined slightly, from 8% globally in 2007 to 6% in 2015 among women.^[1] The findings of a recently released report have indicated that a definite decline in the use of tobacco has been reported, in comparison with the figures at the start of the current century.^[4] However, the reported reduction is significantly less, and it is extremely difficult to attain the global target of reducing tobacco consumption by 30% by 2025.^[4]

The relationship between tobacco and cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) is worth exploring, as they alone account for 44% of all non-communicable disease deaths each year.^[4] It is an alarming fact that people are only aware at present that consumption of tobacco results in cancer, while a large proportion of the world's population are not aware that tobacco is a major predisposing factor for CVDs and stroke, which together account for the deaths of millions of people.^[2,4] Moreover, there is a massive knowledge gap and people are not aware about the wide gamut of health risks associated with tobacco.^[4]

It is high time that national governments should take efforts to safeguard the general population and reduce the associated sufferings resulting from CVDs.^[4] Intervention like ensuring that all indoor (public and workplace) settings are completely smoke-free, promotion of tobacco package warnings, encourage plain packaging, increase taxes, impose bans on marketing and production, and can play a great role in reducing the health risks of tobacco.^[1,2] In addition, efforts should be taken to support people to quit tobacco and prevent them to initiate their consumption itself.^[1]

To conclude, tobacco use has been associated with premature deaths due to various reasons and cardiovascular diseases remain a major cause. It is the need of the hour to explore the association and take necessary actions to improve the quality of life of people.

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