



Why this is important, and what you can do



If we do not act decisively today, a hundred years from now our grandchildren will look back and seriously question how people claiming to be committed to public health and social justice allowed the tobacco epidemic to unfold unchecked.

Dr Gro Brundtland, Director General, WHO, on November 14, 1996, commenting on WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative.



Introduction

The World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC), which represents 80 national associations of chiropractors and is a non-governmental organization (NGO) in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO), strongly supports WHO's public health campaign to reduce smoking and other tobacco use. The WHO campaign is called the **Tobacco Free Initiative**, and is a priority cabinet level project. WHO estimates that the global tobacco pandemic, which caused four million deaths in 2002, will kill ten million people a year by 2030. And every tobacco-related death is preventable.

The WFC supports the Tobacco Free Initiative because of the well-established devastating impact of tobacco use on health, the congruency of this public health issue with the drug-free and healthy living principles of chiropractic health care, and the WFC's duty and desire to support the policies of WHO.

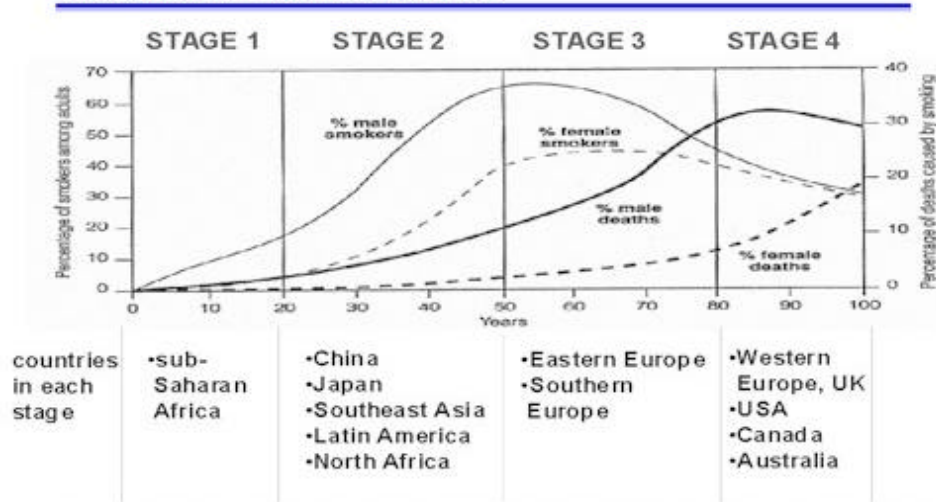
This document contains:

- Some basic information about tobacco use and quitting;
- Some reasons why you should become involved in the Chiropractors Against Tobacco (CAT) campaign, and
- Some easy and effective action steps that can be taken by all chiropractors in their offices wherever they practise.

As an essential part of its campaign the World Health Assembly of the WHO is developing a worldwide treaty supported by national governments and called the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). This treaty would be the world's first global agreement devoted entirely to tobacco control, and its protocols will address all aspects of tobacco use and control, including production, marketing, advertising, taxation, distribution, smuggling, regulation, education, and scientific research.

Each country can measure its own status (e.g., percentage of adults who are smokers, percentage of deaths due to smoking) according to the model proposed by Lopez et al and illustrated below. This presents the four stages of the tobacco epidemic, and gives the time relationship between adult tobacco use and deaths due to smoking.

4 Stages of the Tobacco Epidemic



Adapted from: Lopez AD, Collishaw NE, Pina T. A descriptive model of the cigarette epidemic in developed countries. *Tobacco Control*, 1994, 3: 242-247.

Why all Chiropractors should support this public health campaign

Public health importance. First of all, tobacco use produces extensive avoidable morbidity and mortality. Next, the prolonged time between exposure to tobacco use and nicotine addiction, and then later disease and death, causes people to underestimate the problem. Finally, many people are not alert to the dangers of second-hand smoke (SHS).¹⁻⁴

Congruency with chiropractic principles. This is a natural public health issue for chiropractors, given chiropractic principles, which include a drug-free approach to life and health promotion.

Significance for chiropractic patients. Apart from general health issues, the majority of chiropractic patients present with spinal pain syndromes and there is a documented relationship between smoking and low-back pain.⁵ Many patients will be unaware of the dangers of SHS to their families. For example, children exposed to SHS are 50% more likely to suffer long-term damage to their lungs and to encounter breathing problems such as asthma.⁶

Duty as primary healthcare practitioner. As members of the primary healthcare team, chiropractors have a duty to alert patients to major public health concerns that may have an impact on them and their families.

Enhancing doctor/patient relationship. Your concern about tobacco use will enhance patient care and trust. This is because the tobacco issue is not directly related to your own professional interests, and has a direct impact on the health of your patients and their families.



A dilemma confronts us in advocating tobacco control. How do we, as part of the primary healthcare team, communicate the present and future care costs of an evolving pandemic to the public, and influence public choice and policy decision-makers?

Recommended steps for individual chiropractors

In your office

Tobacco-free zone. Make your office a tobacco-free zone and post an anti-tobacco sign or poster.

Patient brochure. Make available at least one anti-tobacco brochure that can be offered to patients. (A WFC brochure, available in English, French and Spanish, may be downloaded from www.wfc.org/cat).

Observe World No-Tobacco Day — May 31. Show support with appropriate in-office signs and announcements for the WHO World No-Tobacco Day held each year on May 31.

With each patient

Ask patient history questions. Ask the following three questions during every new patient initial consultation, and document answers in the case record:

- ◆ Do you, or does anyone else in your household, smoke or use any tobacco products, or has anyone ever?
- ◆ Do you, or does anyone else in your household, want to quit?
- ◆ Do you, or does anyone else in your household, get exposed to second-hand smoke at home or at work?

(These three questions document tobacco use, tobacco use history and exposure to second-hand smoking. Their limitations are recognized, but they will raise patient awareness of how important these matters are to health, and of your concern. These questions should be asked by the chiropractor rather than by an assistant because of their clinical importance.)

Identify returning patients who want help. On subsequent visits inquire of all patients previously identified as tobacco product users whether they are still using tobacco products and, if so, whether they would like to quit now. Their reply will be your guide in recommending the appropriate clinical intervention, which can range from simple counselling to expert referral.

Provide advice and offer resources. Advise patients of potential dangers to them and their families and offer these resources:

- ◆ **Web sites.** There are numerous web resources for patients and health care professionals, and many sites can be found using key search words such as "tobacco" or "tobacco control". Suggested sites include:

Major anti-smoking organisations

- www.ash.org.uk
- <http://www.infact.org>
- www.ingcat.org
- www.quitnow.info.au
- www.gosmokefree.ca (Canada)
- www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/default.htm (USA)

SOME MORE FACTS

- Unless they quit, up to half of all smokers will die from their smoking, most of them before their 70th birthday and only after years of suffering from a reduced quality of life.
- Major smoking related causes of death are heart disease, stroke and cancer. Cigarette smokers are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's Disease.
- Quitting reduces the risk of stroke and heart attack. After 12 months of not smoking your excess risk of heart disease is down to almost half of that of a smoker. Fifteen years after stopping, this risk is almost the same as for a non-smoker.³
- Quitting reduces the risk of lung cancer if the disease is not already present. After 10 years, the risk is halved.³
- There are early benefits. Within two months of quitting, the blood flow to the hands and feet improves.³
- The risk of death from heart attack increases dramatically with age for women who smoke and take the contraceptive pill.
- Smoking rates among both men and women are going down in North America. Rates for men are almost halved in the past 50 years; 73% of men and 77% of women do not smoke.⁷
- In epidemiological studies on men and women, there is evidence of a relationship between smoking and low-back pain.⁸
- There is evidence of a relationship between smoking and changes in anatomical structures in the lower back.⁹



WHO/United Nations

- www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm (National Tobacco Online Systems)
- www.FCTC.org
- <http://tobacco.who.int>
- www.who.int/aboutwho/en/structure.htm
- www.un.org/popin (UN-Population Divisions home page)

Brochures. You can create your own brochure or use the one developed by the WFC titled *You, Your Family, Your Health.*

Local community resources. Today most communities have resources for patients and family members who wish to quit smoking or using tobacco. Discover the best ones in your community, let their staff know of your interest, and refer patients there.

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Chairperson	Rand Baird DC MPH	USA	DrRandBaird@aol.com
Africa	Evalie Heath DC	Zimbabwe	ekheath@netconnect.co.zw
Asia	Bruce Vaughan DC	Hong Kong SAR China	brusinc@email.hk.net
Eastern Mediterranean	Efstathios Papadopoulos DC	Cyprus	epeco@spidernet.com.cy
Europe	Anthony Metcalfe DC	United Kingdom	ecutone@aol.com
Latin America	Sira Borges DC MD	Brazil	siraborges@hotmail.com
North America	Deborah Kopansky-Giles DC	Canada	dkgiles@cmcc.ca
	Gary Auerbach DC	USA	garyauerbach@hotmail.com
Pacific	Inger Villadsen DC	Australia	inger@hunterlink.net.au
WFC Secretary-General	Mr David Chapman-Smith	Canada	dchapman-smith@wfc.org

WFC member associations and associate members are encouraged to submit ideas and suggestions to their regional representatives on the WFC Health-for-All Committee.



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