

### Current Health Event

#### Tobacco Control

Tobacco consumption is still on the rise. Evidence for the physical harm and economic costs of tobacco use keeps growing. Tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats.

#### Editorial note:

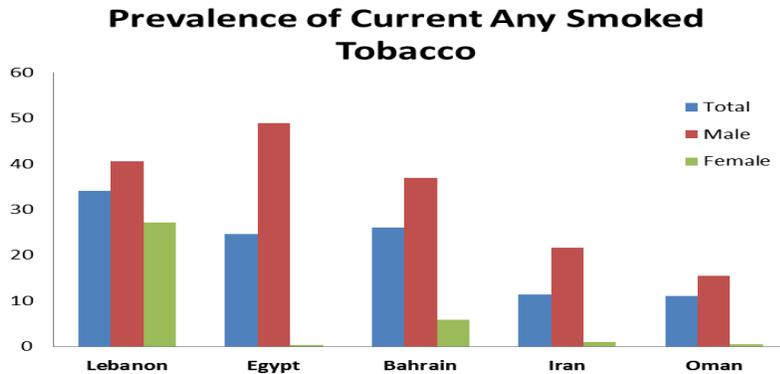
More than 7 million people die every year from tobacco use worldwide, including the 900 000 people that die from exposure to second hand smoke (WHO, 2017).

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 38% of men and 4% of women (21% of adults on average) smoke tobacco. In some countries of the EMR, smoking can be as high as 52% among men and 22% among women. Smoking rates among youth can reach 42% among boys and 31% among girls (WHO FCTC, 2017).

In Lebanon, 38% of adults currently smoke tobacco (47.6% males and 29% females) (Lebanon STEPWISE NCD survey, 2017). Estimates show that, if things continue the way they are, the prevalence of smoking will increase in the coming years.

About 40% of the Lebanese governmental and private school students between the ages of 13 and 15 ever smoked cigarettes, more among males (45% males and 33 % females), and about 38% smoke water pipe. Moreover, about 70% of the Lebanese governmental and

**Figure 1:** WHO age-standardized estimated prevalence of smoking among those aged 15 years or more: Year 2015; WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2017



private school students aged 13 to 15 years are exposed to cigarette smoke (passive smoking) in their homes and in public places and about 50% are exposed to smoke of water pipe in the same places (Lebanon 2011 GYTS).

Lebanon issued the Tobacco Prevention law 174 in 2011, based on the FCTC Convention to which Lebanon adhered since 2005. Although the tobacco law has witnessed poor implementation, advocacy and awareness raising continue with support from WHO and active NGOs, focusing mainly on: generating evidence for policy support through AUB-WHO global knowledge hub for waterpipe smoking, conducting media campaigns and school based and community based awareness activities.

In addition, the National Tobacco program, with support of WHO, developed the pictorial Health Warnings to be used on Tobacco products packages, awaiting processing through appropriate government channels to become effective.

The MOPH adopted the MPOWER strategies that encompasses six technical areas:

- Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies
- Protect people from tobacco use
- Offer help to quit tobacco use
- Warn about the Tobacco dangers
- Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship
- Raise taxes on tobacco.

By implementing these measures countries including Lebanon reduce the heavy burden of disease and death attributable to tobacco use or exposure.

Notifiable Diseases in Lebanon [cumulative n° of cases among all residents (among Syrians)] as of 19 December 2017				
Disease	2016	2017	Oct.	Nov.
<b>Vaccine Preventable Diseases</b>				
Polio	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
AFP	123 (17)	72 (18)	4(2)	4 (2)
Measles	44 (18)	110(40)	6 (3)	8 (5)
Mumps	486 (86)	227(45)	11(2)	15 (6)
Pertussis	97 (18)	88 (21)	8 (2)	2 (1)
Rabies	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Rubella	12 (6)	10 (6)	0(0)	0 (0)
Tetanus	2 (0)	0 (0)	0(0)	0 (0)
Viral Hep. B	367(48)	312(50)	41 (7)	25 (4)
<b>Water/Food Borne Diseases</b>				
Brucellosis	402 (165)	450(149)	30 (8)	16 (1)
Cholera	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Hydatid cyst	11 (2)	18 (5)	1 (0)	1 (1)
Typhoid fever	598 (11)	639(18)	60 (1)	51 (1)
Viral Hep. A	519(78)	730(126)	108(21)	103(22)
<b>Other Diseases</b>				
Leishmaniasis	58 (52)	140(116)	9 (6)	0 (0)
Meningitis	458 (63)	338(70)	36 (7)	20 (4)
Viral Hep. C	116 (8)	123 (10)	20 (1)	10 (1)