



TOBACCO-FREE

ISSUE VII: JANUARY – MARCH 2020

COVID 19

Times



THE NEWSLETTER

www.rctcpgi.org

REACHED 1 LAC VISITORS GLOBALLY

India's first E-Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (E-RCTC), an exceptional step towards tobacco-free world, has been captivating the eyes globally. It has been launched by PGIMER Chandigarh in collaboration with The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) by Hon. Smt. Preeti Sudan, Union Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on September 14, 2018 amidst senior-most representatives of around 20 organizations working on tobacco control in India. The link to the E-RCTC is <https://rctcpgi.org/>. The E-RCTC has been developed as a one-point resource system which has helped and allowed many researchers, implementers and policy makers to access information within no time. It has helped in strengthening National Control Tobacco Programme (NTCP) to a great extent. Further, this online hub contains latest notifications and circulars by national and state government's related to effective implementation of NTCP. E-RCTC compiles and channelizes the correct and reliable information, and then disseminates it from one source.

The portal has helped in increasing the global collaborations between organizations and health care professionals from different corners of the globe who strive to work on diverse tobacco related issues for better enforcement of tobacco control laws in their organizations. It has also enabled researchers to gain knowledge related to the best practices and interventions in tobacco control.

Editor Speak



Our virtual resource centre for tobacco control (E-RCTC) is showing the way to global tobacco control leaders as it had already crossed 0.1 million views from over 100 countries. In this challenging and unprecedented times of Corona pandemic, we came up with a special 7th issue of Tobacco Free

Times- "Covid-19 and Smoking" to highlight the importance of smoking cessation for reducing the devastating impact of Covid-19 among smokers. I urge smokers to use this opportunity to quit smoking and tobacco industry to stop manufacturing, marketing and selling tobacco to prevent exacerbating Covid-19 crisis.

Dr Sonu Goel

Director, E-RCTC & Professor
Department of Community Medicine & School of Public Health, PGIMER, Chandigarh

Experts Speak



The E-RCTC is a comprehensive repository on tobacco control information and beneficial for all professional and students engaged in tobacco control. It is not only a one stop reference centre but also provides a unique opportunity for multiple stakeholders including policymakers, implementers, researchers and tobacco control advocates to learn, exchange views and set tobacco control agenda.

Dr. Monika Arora

Director & Professor
Health Promotion Division
Public Health Foundation of India, New Delhi

The E-RCTC initiative from School of Public Health, PGIMER, Chandigarh is a unique platform equipped with all necessary updated information in advancing tobacco control initiatives across the country.



Certainly, it would help personal of various field like program officers, academicians, researchers, service providers and other stakeholders through correct information and facts about tobacco control. It will also support in framing strategic implementation of tobacco control laws and programme, and to curb the menace of tobacco use.

Prof. (Dr.) Vikas Bhatia

Head, Department of Community Medicine
& Family Medicine
All India Institute of Medical Sciences,
Bhubaneswar, Odisha



The E-Resource Centre for Tobacco Control is a unique platform from where we can fetch all the information related to tobacco control activities in India. It will immensely help the implementers, academicians, researchers and other stakeholders by providing correct, reliable information and facts about tobacco control.

Dr. Gurmandeep Singh

Assistant Programme Officer, NTCP
Punjab



PROJECT UPDATES

Chandigarh: Workshop on best practices of Tobacco Control in India



A roundtable consultation on "Best Practices of Tobacco Control in India – A step towards Tobacco Free India" was successfully held at Hotel Shivalik View, Chandigarh on 20-21 January 2020. A total of 20 participants from different organizations shared various best practices in tobacco control at national level.

Puducherry: Sensitization workshop

A high level sensitization workshop for policy makers and officials of different stakeholder departments was successfully held at Hotel Accord, Puducherry on 30th January 2020. The main objective was to strengthen NTCP in state of Puducherry.



Shillong: Dissemination workshop

A dissemination workshop on the findings of baseline assessment of COTPA in district Shillong was successfully held at NHM Conference Hall, D.H.S., Shillong on 29th January 2020 in collaboration with The Union, PGIMER, NEIGRIHMS & State Tobacco Control Cell, Meghalaya. A total of 18 participants participated in the workshop which included Dr Lana E Lyngdoh Nongbri, State Nodal Officer, National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) & NOHP and officers of many stakeholder departments (Food and safety, Media, NGOs, NEHU & Municipal Corporation etc.). Dr. Lana informed the gathering about the achievements of NTCP in state of Meghalaya. She also informed that an initiative namely "Smoke-Free Shillong" has been initiated under the guidance of Chief Secretary, Government of Meghalaya and underscored the role of collaboration between various departments along with members of civil society and representation of public to achieve this mission.



Puducherry: Tobacco Control Workshop held

A Tobacco Control Workshop was held on January, 22, 2020 by JIPMER, Puducherry with the help of Indira Gandhi Medical College & Research Institute and Government of Puducherry for Medical Social Workers and Counsellors at different PHCs in Puducherry. Participants discussed tobacco control measurements and agreed to disseminate them further through on-job trainings.



Tobacco Free Times 6th Edition Released



The 6th Edition of Tobacco-Free Times was released during "Roundtable Consultation on Best Practices of Tobacco Control in India – A step towards Tobacco Free India" which was held at Chandigarh on 20th-21st January 2020. The various dignitaries present on the occasion were Dr Mira B Aghi, Dr L. Swasticharan, Dr Rana J Singh, Dr Sonu Goel, Dr Rakesh Gupta, Ms Radhika Srivastava, Mr Ranjit Singh.

Odisha: "No Smoking" Signages

With the efforts of the Project team of Odisha, supported by PGIMER Chandigarh, The Union-SEA and AIIMS Bhubaneswar, new "NO SMOKING" signages were displayed at all key government institutes in Odisha.

THIS PREMISE/BUILDING IS TOBACCO FREE

Use of any form of tobacco in this premise is prohibited and is a punishable offence with fine up to Rs. 200/-



If you find anybody smoking/spitting tobacco please report to:

Name: _____

Designation: _____ Telephone No: _____



To quit tobacco call 1800 11 2356 or give a missed call at 011-22901701



Supported by: AIIMS Bhubaneswar and PGIMER Chandigarh
For further information, please visit our website: www.rctcpqi.org

Meghalaya: Tobacco ban at tourists sites

A circular was issued on 23rd January 2020 by Director of Tourism, Shillong, Meghalaya for the declaration of all Tourist sites in Meghalaya as Tobacco Free and COTPA compliant.



Meghalaya: Hookahs banned

A successful meeting with Jt. Commissioner of Food Safety, Government of Meghalaya Sh. SN Sangma, regarding enforcement of tobacco control laws and banning of serving hookahs in hotels and restaurants in the State of Meghalaya resulted in issuing an order to state and district officials to implement the same.

Puducherry: Sensitization Seminars

Short term seminars on strengthening NTCP were conducted by project team along with partnering officials of JIPMER in the meeting of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan of Education Department of Puducherry state and sensitization seminar of Nursing Batch on NTCP.

Small Rise in Prices: Survey on Tobacco Products Completed



A survey on prices of tobacco products was successfully conducted from 5th-15th February in all the project states. A small rise of prices has been noticed in few cigarette brands while no changes in the prices of other tobacco products (bidi, smokeless and pan masala products) was observed.



COVID-19 and Smoking



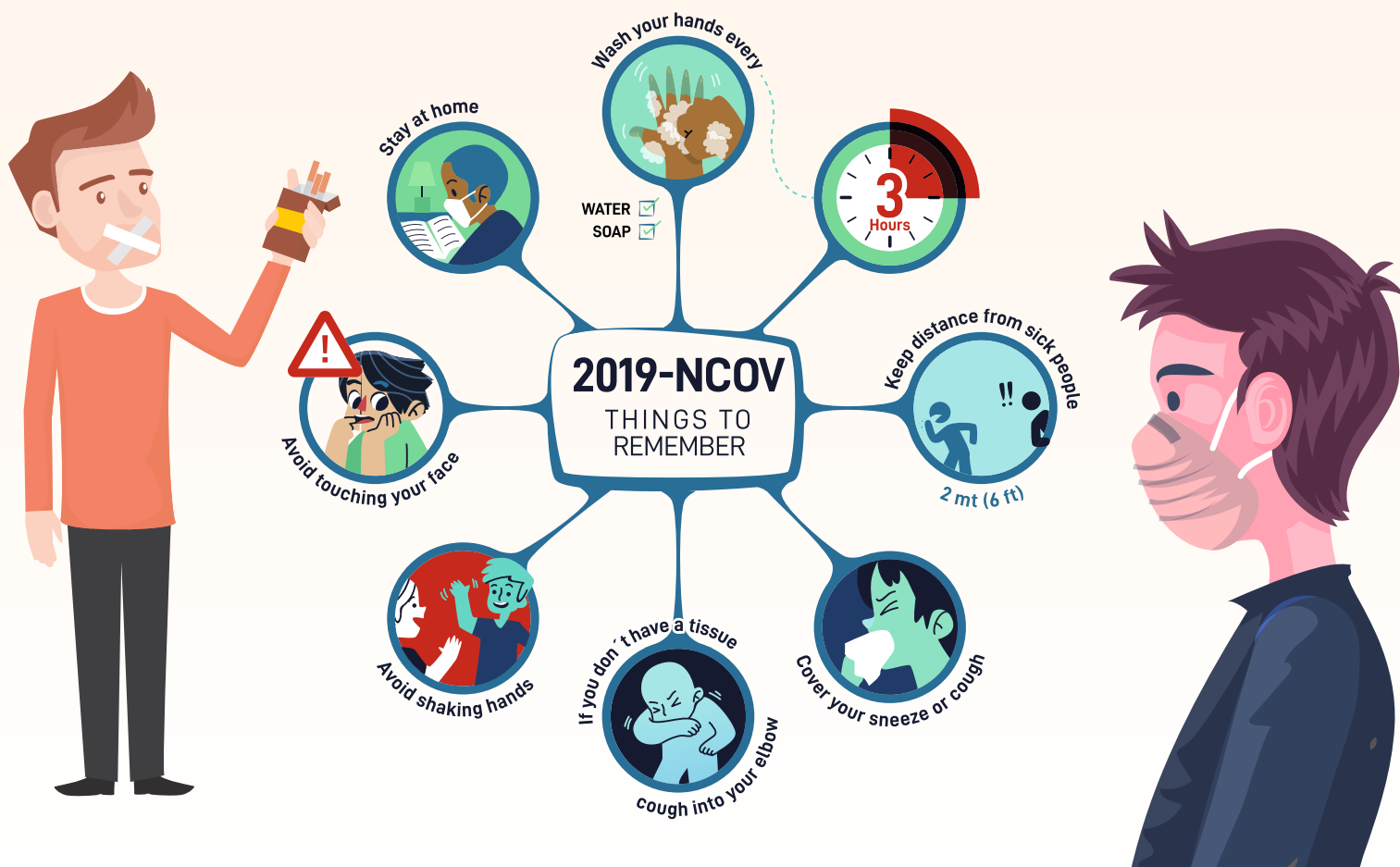
Yet another opportunity to quit smoking in light of the pandemic of 21st Century



COVID-19 (novel coronavirus diseases or coronavirus outbreak which initially appeared in Wuhan, Hubei province of China in December 2019) is a pandemic of 21st century which is continuing to rise across countries transcending borders. As of 31st March 2020 (10:00 GMT+5:30, WHO), a total number of 837086 confirmed cases have been reported from almost every country of the world, including 41249 confirmed deaths, the majority of which have been reported in US (175669 cases). India is currently in Stage-2 of the epidemic (i.e. local transmission by a person who has travel history) with no sign of community transmission which is third stage (1403 active cases and 47 death cases (as on 31.03.2020 at 09:15 AM, MoH&FW).

Tobacco smoking is an established risk factor for various adverse lung health and other respiratory diseases. It is also deleterious to

immune system due to which smokers are more vulnerable to infectious diseases. A study conducted in China among patients diagnosed with COVID-19 associated pneumonia reported that the odds of disease progression were 14 times higher among patients with history of smoking as compared to non smokers. Another systematic review published on March 20, 2020 reported that tobacco smoking is more likely associated with the negative progression and adverse outcomes (death rates, admissions to intensive care units, mechanical ventilation support) of COVID-19. Apart from this, smokers can aid in spreading of coronavirus through sharing of (or using discarded butts) cigarettes or hookah (water pipes involving sharing of mouth piece), thereby exposing fellow smokers to infection. In addition, during smoking fingers are in contact with lips, thereby increasing the possibility of transmission of virus from hand to mouth.





SYMPTOMS



FEVER



COUGH



CHILL



CORONAVIRUS

COVID-19

COVID-19 is primarily a disease of respiratory tract, in which virus enters lung alveolar tissue and mucosal epithelial cells using ACE-2 receptors. It attacks the already vulnerable and damaged lungs due to smoking, thus aggravating the adverse effects on respiratory functions. Further, smoking affects the immune functions of the body resulting in a higher risk of contracting the virus and developing severe complications.

The existing data supports the relationship between COVID-19 and smoking, thus calls for utilizing this opportunity to educate and provide support to smokers for quitting this risky behavior.

Experts Speak



There is an opportunity even in a calamity like Corona which can be effectively utilised by fence sitters who had been contemplating quitting tobacco. They may pledge to do so during corona crisis using it as a 'NUDGE or Cues to Action'. The crusaders for Quit Tobacco should not relax their vigil for the noble 'QUIT TOBACCO INDIA' mission.

Prof. Amarjit Singh

Head, Department of Community Medicine & School of Public Health, PGIMER, Chandigarh



In recent studies, it has been proved beyond doubt that tobacco smokers are more prone to develop severe pneumonia with an increased chance of mortality in case of COVID19 infection. There is an increased risk of bacterial and viral infections with smoking cigarettes, Bidis or Hookahs. Among Chinese patients diagnosed with COVID-19 associated pneumonia, the odds of disease progression (including death) were 14 times higher among people with a history of smoking compared to those who did not smoke. This was the strongest risk factor among those examined."

Dr Rakesh Gupta

President/Director of Public Health, Strategic Instt. for Public Health Education and Research (SIPHER)



Covid-19 mutated from being purely a zoonotic virus to one that is transmissible from human-to-human directly targeting lungs. We already know that tobacco, especially in smoking form, directly affects the lungs. It is also confirmed that the effect of both is synergistic. This is, therefore, most appropriate time, when we all are under lockdown because of the threat of this Coronavirus, to think and make a successful attempt towards quitting any kind of tobacco use completely.

Dr Parkash Gupta

Director, Healix-Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health Mumbai, India

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TOBACCO REPORTERS

Smoking increases risks for COVID-19, warns WHO

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned the smokers across the globe to quit smoking immediately as it puts a person at a high risk for COVID-19. The statement came in the view of several misleading Facebook posts claiming that smoking prevents people from getting infected with the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. Refuting the claims, the WHO said that smoking doesn't protect but increases the risk of severe coronavirus illness.



COVID-19: TOBACCO USE AND VAPING

SMOKING

Smoking cigarettes/*bidis*/*kreteks*/*sheesha* and other forms of smoking products can increase your chances of getting COVID-19 by:

Transferring the virus by bringing your hands to your mouth

Smoking damages lungs, heart and other body parts and may increase your risk of getting a severe case of COVID-19.



VAPING

Vaping makes lungs more vulnerable to infection and disease. It also weakens the immune system.



SHEESHA

Sharing tobacco products such as waterpipe/*sheesha*/*hukka* can transmit the virus between people.

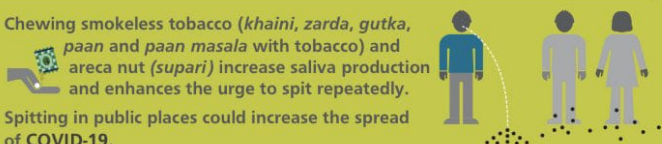
The *sheesha* apparatus (including the hose and chamber) itself may contribute to this risk by providing an environment that promotes the survival of the virus outside the body, as it is not cleaned often in social and community settings.



SMOKELESS TOBACCO AND BETEL NUT CHEWING

Chewing smokeless tobacco (*khaini*, *zarda*, *gutka*, *paan* and *paan masala* with tobacco) and areca nut (*supari*) increase saliva production and enhances the urge to spit repeatedly.

Spitting in public places could increase the spread of COVID-19.



QUIT NOW – IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO QUIT!



Dear smokers, it is the perfect time to quit smoking

Quitting smoking might reduce viral transmission and the risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms, a new study claimed. "First and foremost, COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, with studies indicating that its site of infection, viral replication, and virion shedding occurs within the respiratory tract," the study highlighted. The World Health Organization (WHO) has strict behavioural guidelines meant to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus that causes the COVID-19 disease, such as covering one's mouth when coughing or sneezing, hand washing, and social distancing.

People who smoke, vape at higher risk of COVID-19



The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) recently stated that people who smoke, vape, or have a history of substance use disorders may be at higher risk of COVID-19 infection and complications. Dr. Nora Volkow, Director NIDA, noted, "Since the virus attacks the lungs, people who smoke or vape tobacco or marijuana are at higher risk from COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus".

Coronavirus deadlier for men than for women?

Men are dying at higher rates than women from novel coronavirus, highlighted the statistics emerging from across the globe. A report in an International daily has explained that the reason behind higher vulnerability to coronavirus in men is most likely due to the fact that men are much more likely to smoke cigarettes. It damages their lungs and primes them for inflammation and further damage when they are battling an infection.

Smoking decreases chances of COVID-19 recovery

Experts have claimed that smoking does decrease the respiratory defence mechanism and therefore, the recovery does slow down in case the person is COVID19 positive. It has also been advised that people should either decrease or quit smoking. Meanwhile, several reports have claimed that smoking puts a person at a higher risk of catching the disease.

Smoking cessation during COVID-19 pandemic

Role of tobacco smoking is gaining colossal attention in the spread and exacerbation of COVID-19. COVID-19 is predominantly a disease of the respiratory tract, with emerging evidence indicating that cellular entry, viral replication and virion shedding occurs within the respiratory tract. It has been strongly recommended by several experts that public health messages focused on how to curb the spread of SARS-CoV-2 also include country specific, evidence-based smoking cessation strategies.

Health experts wonder whether smoking, pollution make COVID-19 worse

Scientists from across the globe have contended that smoking and air pollution could be responsible for the current outbreak of coronavirus. "Given what we know now, it is very likely that people who are exposed to more air pollution and who are smoking tobacco products are going to fare worse if infected with COVID than those who are breathing cleaner air, and who don't smoke," Aaron Bernstein, the interim director of the Center for Climate, Health, was quoted by a leading daily.

54-year-old with history of tobacco use dies of COVID-19 in New York

54-year-old Alvin Simmons was hospitalized on March 14 with a fever and acute respiratory symptoms. He later tested positive for COVID-19. Officials at Rochester Regional Health say he had multiple, serious underlying conditions, including hypertension, liver disease, and a history of tobacco use. Simmons died on March 17.

THE PARLIAMENT OF ARMENIA APPROVES NEW LAW ON TOBACCO CONTROL

On 11 February 2020, the Parliament of Armenia voted for a tobacco control law aimed at substantially strengthening tobacco control in a country. The new law includes, among other measures: a ban on indoor smoking in all public places, workplaces and public transport; and a total ban on the advertisement and promotion of tobacco products. The ban on smoking in cafés and restaurants will come into force in March 2022. The fine for a violation of the smoking ban in indoor places ranges from 50 000 drams (US\$ 105) to 200 000 drams (US\$ 418). Once implemented, the new law will reduce tobacco use and improve health in, and the economy of, Armenia.

India bans e-cigarette in flights and airports



On 10 January 2020, After imposing a ban on the production, manufacture and advertisement of e-cigarettes or electronic cigarettes in the country last September, the government has now decided to ban the carrying of e-cigarettes on aircraft. Aviation security regulator the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) in a circular said that e-cigarettes will not be allowed in both domestic and international flights as well as at airports. "It has been decided that e-cigarettes including all forms of Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS). It also proposed a jail term for offenders up to one year and a fine of Rs 1 lakh. In the case of repeat offenders, the jail term is increased to 3 years with Rs 5 lakh.



TOBACCO REPORTERS



Tobacco Control Programme to be more stringent in Mysuru, Karnataka

The implementation of National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) is expected to become more stringent in Mysuru, with the authorities fixing a target for Panchayat Development Officers (PDO) and Mysuru City Corporation (MCC) health inspectors to book minimum of 20 cases per month under the Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA).



Punjab Police to enforce ban on e-cigarettes and hookah bars



State Tobacco Control Cell has collaborated with the Punjab Police and initiated a state-level drive to restrict tobacco consumption and to save children and youth. Prabodh Kumar, Director, Bureau of Investigation said "Police officials are important stakeholders for the effective implementation of Anti Tobacco Laws. "The Police department will now work in close collaboration with the Health Department to strictly implement the e-Cigarettes prohibition Act 2019 and other Anti Tobacco laws in the state," he assured.

5th National Conference on Tobacco or Health (NCTOH)

"Multisectoral convergence
for Tobacco-Free India by 2030:
Leading the way towards SDGs"

REGISTER www.nctoh2020.com

25th-27th September 2020

Organised by
Department of Community Medicine &
School of Public Health, PGIMER, Chandigarh



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