NCDs in Asia:
YOUNG PEOPLE are Key to Curbing the Epidemic

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Overview

- NCD epidemic in Asia is growing and its consequences are severe

- Addressing risk factors among youth is a key strategy to curb the epidemic

- Policy and programmatic strategies are available to move the agenda forward
Growing NCD Epidemic in Asia

NCDs are the leading cause of death throughout Asia

- In almost half the countries, NCDs account for three-quarters or more of all deaths
- In India, NCDs account for 60 percent of all deaths
- Asia is home to 60% of the world’s diabetic population
Impact of NCDs

- Higher chance of premature deaths from NCDs in low and middle income countries
- Pressure on already-stretched health care systems
- Potential to limit economic growth and development
- Could reverse progress in health and development
Why Focus on Young People?

- All four key risk factors are modifiable behaviors
- Typically initiated or established in adolescence or young adulthood
- Youth behaviors set the stage for NCDs later in life
Four Key NCD Risk Factors

- Tobacco use
- Harmful use of alcohol
- Physical inactivity
- Unhealthy diet
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Four Main NCDs

- Cardiovascular diseases
- Chronic respiratory diseases
- Diabetes
- Cancers (most)
Adolescence: an important period to intervene

- 70% of premature deaths in adults due to behaviors established in adolescence

- Adolescence & young adulthood
  - increased autonomy
  - higher susceptibility to substance abuse

- Risk factors among the young on the rise
By 2050, Over Two-fold Increase in the Age 45+ Population

Source: UN Population Division
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South Asia 2015 and 2050

Source: UN Population Division
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Overweight/Obesity Status

% of secondary school boys and girls (13-15) overweight or obese

Source: WHO & CDC
Tobacco Use

% of secondary school boys & girls (13-15) using tobacco in last 30 days

Source: WHO & CDC
Alcohol Use

% of secondary school boys & girls (13-15) using alcohol in last 30 days

Source: WHO & CDC
Window of Opportunity is NOW!

- Large young population in South Asia: potentially large pay-off from interventions
- Some risk factor levels among youth still relatively lower than other regions
- Time to invest in young people to help them grow into healthy & productive adults, while lowering future NCD burden
Strategies for Action
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- Policy and Structural Measures
- Social and Behavioral Interventions
Policy & Structural Measures

- High level taxes
- Bans on advertisement, promotion, and sponsorship
- Graphic warnings or plain packaging
- Regulations governing the food industry
- Mandates for schools and public places
- Supportive built environment
Healthy Diet: Singapore

- Public-private partnership
- Guidelines incorporated into the Singapore Code of Advertising Practice
- Criteria to determine what can be marketed to children ≤ 12 years
Alcohol Control: Thailand

- Alcoholic Beverage Control Act
  - Advertising bans
  - Warning labels
  - Minimum age for purchase
  - Restrictions on place of sale and consumption
  - 2015: No sale within 300m of schools
Social & Behavior Change Interventions

- School, media, community, business, workplace-based programs:
  - Nutrition and physical activity
  - Education and behavior change
  - Risk factor screening
  - Tobacco and alcohol cessation
  - Responsible purchasing
Physical activity at school: China

- Happy 10 to promote physical activity and healthy eating
- Scaled up in 30 provinces and 1600 elementary schools
- Incorporated into government-led “Healthy Lifestyle for All” initiative
Tobacco Control: Thailand

- Award winning video: Smoking Kid
- Over 5 million views in 10 days
- Calls to national quitline increased
- Low cost
Integrate NCD and SRH services

- Leverage existing SRH infrastructure
  - NCD and SRH risk factors overlap
  - SRH is often a primary point of contact
  - Integration can help mainstream services
- Youth providers can offer holistic care
Strengthen cross-cutting areas

- Political commitment
- Multisectoral collaboration
- Coordination among entities
- Regulatory capacity
- Program and policy evaluations
Strengthen data surveillance

- Up-to-date data on NCD risk factors among young people are critical:
  - Implement frequent surveillance
  - Standardize data collection tools
  - Capture full range of populations
  - Piggyback on existing surveys
  - Make data available for decisionmaking
By reducing risk behaviors among young people, WE can change the course of the NCD epidemic in Asia!
THANK YOU

For questions/suggestions, contact us at:

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