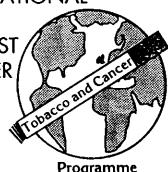


From the International Union Against Cancer

INTERNATIONAL
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UICC special project on smoking cessation

Michael Kunze

Tobacco control has to adopt a comprehensive approach. This approach must involve a variety of strategies including health education and public information, encouragement of smoking cessation, legislation, price policy and taxation.

Helping people to stop smoking cigarettes presents one of the greatest challenges facing workers in public health and preventive medicine today. One of the most promising strategies for addressing this major public health issue involves the physician as the interventionist.

The First European Conference on Tobacco Policy stated in its charter against tobacco for Europe that every citizen has the right to be informed of the unparalleled health risks of tobacco use and every citizen has the right to receive encouragement and help to overcome nicotine dependence. If the citizen has the right to receive encouragement and help, it is the duty of the health system to provide counselling and treatment. Smoking cessation programmes are vital components of any overall smoking control strategy. While millions of smokers have given up since the health consequences of smoking became known, many adults still smoke, although surveys have shown that at least two-thirds of them wish to give up.

If one believes that smoking cessation not only involves prevention but also requires regular treatment, it is necessary to make smoking cessation therapy also available in hospitals.

Smoking cessation therapy

Smoking cessation therapy is a typical example of life-style medicine. This concept is based on several elements: firstly, to deal with modern health problems like smoking, hypercholesterolemia and diabetes, one has to combine pharmaceutical treatment with behavioural modification. This approach to medical care has still to be fully acknowledged by many health professionals and should be strongly encouraged; indeed, in the long term, smoking-cessation treatment must be integrated into normal disease treatment whenever tobacco-related diseases are concerned or when continued tobacco consumption may influence the success of any medical intervention.

Secondly, the treatment of nicotine addiction must be regarded as an integral part of health care; it also means new jobs for the health professionals and job-enrichment for those already active in this field. It is absolutely

necessary that doctors and patients work together to solve the clinical problem. Thirdly, the implementation of life-style medicine means acknowledging the synergistic effects of prevention and treatment. For example, the treatment of nicotine addiction means reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases and cancer; the treatment of lipid metabolism disorders means preventing the onset of atherosclerosis, etc.

Objectives

The UICC Special Project on Smoking Cessation has the following objectives:

- to serve as a clearing-house for scientific information
- to organise and take part in national and international meetings
- to establish and maintain a network of experts in the field.

Achievements

Examples of achievements so far include the following:

- issue of a consensus document on smoking cessation for German-speaking countries
- taking part in meetings organised by the UICC, WHO, IUATLD, EMASH, and various national organisations in Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Slovenia, Spain, Greece, Argentina, The Netherlands, Poland, Russia, France, and Denmark
- regular contacts with all organisations relevant to the issue and exchange of information with many experts in the field
- continuous dissemination of specific information to answer enquiries from all over the world.

Consensus

Developing a consensus document involves preparing a common statement based on the state of the art of the science reflected by experts in a given field; this always refers to the actual knowledge and attitudes expressed by the members of the consensus development process. A consensus has to be updated on a more or less regular basis, taking into account experience gained and scientific progress made.

Consensus documents are valuable tools in the promotion of public health or other scientific ideas and provide a basis for further public relations and/or post-graduate training activities, and a basis for evaluation.



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