

Study to Assess Impact of Tobacco Consumption on COVID Patients

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Based on the available scientific evidence and consistent with the WHO statement on tobacco use and COVID-19 issued on 11 May 2020 (accessed at <https://www.who.int/news/item/11-05-2020-who-statement-tobacco-use-and-covid-19>), the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued an advisory on 28-07-2020 regarding "COVID-19 Pandemic and Tobacco use in India".

A copy of the said advisory is available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/COVID19PandemicandTobaccoUseinIndia.pdf>.

Available global and Indian scientific evidence suggest that tobacco is a major cause of premature deaths and is a major risk factor for various non-communicable diseases like cancer, cardiovascular diseases, stroke, lung diseases etc. Various studies have also suggested that forty percent of the tuberculosis burden in India may be attributed to smoking.

Several steps have been taken by the Government to prevent tobacco consumption. Some of the major steps are as under;

- A comprehensive legislation, namely the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA 2003) to regulate the use of tobacco products has been enacted. The provisions under COTPA, 2003 and the Rules made thereunder mandate prohibition of smoking in public places; ban on sale of tobacco products to and by minors, sale of tobacco products within a radius of 100 yards of educational institutions; prohibition on direct and indirect advertising of tobacco products and mandatory display of specified health warnings.
- The National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) was launched in 2007-08 with the aim to (i) create awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption, (ii) ensure effective implementation of the provisions under COTPA, 2003 (iii) Set up tobacco cessation centres to help people quit tobacco use, and (iv) facilitate implementation of strategies for prevention and control of tobacco advocated by WHO Framework Convention of Tobacco Control.
- Rules have been notified to regulate films and TV programmes depicting scenes of tobacco usage to spread awareness. Such films and TV programmes are statutorily required to run anti-tobacco health spots, disclaimers and static health warnings.
- Specified health warnings to cover 85% of the principal display area of tobacco product packs. The Quitline number, 1800112356, has been included in new specified health warnings.
- The Ministry has started National Tobacco Quitline to provide tobacco cessation services to the community and has launched a pan-India "mCessation" initiative to reach out to tobacco users who are willing to quit tobacco use and to support them towards successful quitting through text-messaging via mobile phones.
- Guidelines for Tobacco Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) to implement Section-6 of COTPA, 2003 have been disseminated to States/UTs
- The Food Safety and Standards Regulations (FSSAI) issued in 2011 under the Food Safety &

Standards Act, 2006 lay down that tobacco and nicotine cannot be used as ingredients in Food Products.
The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, DrBharati Pravin Pawar stated this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha here today.

MV

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