



A woman has her blood pressure checked. High blood pressure is one of the most important contributors to heart attacks and stroke – which together are the world’s highest causes of premature death and disability.

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases, are currently the leading national cause of death in Egypt. NCDs are estimated to account for 82% of all deaths in Egypt and 67% of premature deaths.

The 2011/12 STEPwise survey, conducted by the Ministry of Health and Population, in collaboration with WHO, revealed a significantly high prevalence of risk factors for NCDs among the adult population, including:

- a 24% prevalence of smoking and a growing use of shisha tobacco.
- one of the most overweight populations in the world, with 66% of women overweight and 42% obese and almost three quarters of the population not involved in vigorous activity.
- a 17% prevalence of diabetes.
- a 40% prevalence of hypertension. Egyptians have an average daily salt intake of 9 grammes, nearly double the recommended allowance.

Recognizing the significant burden and continued negative impact NCDs can have on social and economic development, the government of Egypt has made positive progress through the establishment of an NCD Unit within the MoHP.

WHO is providing technical assistance to the unit to develop a multi-sectoral national action plan for NCDs. At the Government’s request WHO developed a situational analysis report entitled ‘The Status of Noncommunicable Diseases in Egypt’ that will form the evidence base for the action plan.

WHO supports MoHP in controlling NCDs and their underlying risk factors, such as raising tobacco taxes and reducing salt and replacing trans fat in the Egyptian diet. A key achievement has been the development of a pilot project integrating NCD prevention, early detection and management services to the primary health care level, including strengthening relevant referral systems. Following the success of the pilot this initiative is now being rolled out to 17 primary health care centres across eight governorates.

As a member of the national cancer committee, WHO is assisting in the development of the national cancer plan which will address prevention, early detection and diagnosis, treatment and palliative care. WHO has provided support for scaling up the current national cancer registry through the assessment of five existing population-based cancer registries.

Looking forward, WHO is working with the MoHP in the development of a similar national plan to address diabetes mellitus, in collaboration with the International Diabetes Federation.

Continued research plays a vital role in making evidenced-based decisions for NCDs and WHO has developed three key studies on tobacco control in Egypt as well as a study on the effectiveness of current nutrition interventions.

Related links

[Noncommunicable diseases, see Chronic diseases](#)

[Regional noncommunicable diseases programme](#)

[STEPwise approach to chronic disease risk factor surveillance \(STEPS\)](#) □

[STEPwise surveillance implementation in Egypt](#)

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