



Tehran, 29 June 2021 – The establishment of a national tobacco cessation helpline and tobacco cessation service clinics across the Islamic Republic of Iran was announced at a launching event at the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

The event was attended by the WHO Representative to Islamic Republic of Iran Dr Syed Jaffar Hussain and WHO technical team members, the Deputy Health Minister of Public Health Dr Alireza Raeisi, and other officials from the Ministry of Health and Medical Sciences and universities of medical sciences, physicians and staff, and helpline operators.

The clinics operate across 63 universities of medical sciences and were set up, and will be supported under the direct leadership of the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention Department of the Ministry. The department has initiated several other inter-related tobacco cessation projects in the country to support people trying to quit smoking, in cooperation with the Secretariat for the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and with guidance from WHO.

These projects include improving the management of tobacco cessation services, designing and implementing a helpline for those who wish to quit, building capacity of primary health care staff working in the selected comprehensive health centres that offer tobacco cessation services, conducting advocacy and raising awareness on tobacco cessation and boosting visibility of tobacco cessation services.

The Secretariat for the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control at the Ministry, in collaboration with WHO, is implementing additional activities also. Bans on waterpipe use and the tobacco-free initiative in 63 cities and 63 villages were also implemented in early 2020. In addition, the creation of tobacco-free schools and campuses is an ongoing activity by the Secretariat, in collaboration with Tehran University and Ministry of Education. Offering tobacco cessation services is a key component cutting across all of these projects which are being implemented with WHO technical support.

Many smokers are well informed about the health risks of smoking and the use of tobacco being linked to various diseases, and many are willing to quit. Providing easy access to tobacco cessation services will increase the success rates for this group. To emphasize that, World No Tobacco Day 2021 focused on tobacco cessation services and the impact of their availability on quitting rates.

World No Tobacco Day was celebrated on 31 May 2021, and is continuing as a one-year campaign during which time different activities can be organized to raise awareness of tobacco cessation services and introduce possible measures to expedite them. WHO, in collaboration with Member States, launched this year-long global campaign to help 100 million people quit tobacco.



Tobacco use kills more than 8 million people each year globally. More than 7 million of those deaths result from direct tobacco use, while around 1.2 million are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke. Statistics show globally that about 40% of the young

generation are exposed to second-hand smoke.

According to the national noncommunicable diseases risk factor study (STEPS 2016), about 14% of the population over 18 years old in Islamic Republic of Iran were smokers. The smoking status of adolescents aged 13–15 years old in March 2016, also showed that about 3% of adolescents were smoking cigarettes and about 6% were waterpipe smokers. In addition, statistics showed about 15% of the population over the age of 15 years old are exposed to the second-hand smoke in public places and about 26% at home.

WHO predicts one billion deaths from smoking across the world this century if no serious action is taken to control and prevent tobacco use. Also, the Organization says that if current trends continue, Islamic Republic of Iran will be one of the countries with the highest rates of tobacco use over the next 40 years.

Tobacco control activities in Islamic Republic of Iran started in 1993 under the auspices of the National Tobacco Control Committee. Islamic Republic of Iran ratified the WHO FCTC in 2005, following which, the National Headquarters for Control and Campaign against Tobacco was established under the Ministry's leadership in 2007.

During Monday's ceremony, an online platform for psychological self-assessment and self-care was launched to encourage the general population toward mental health self-assessment and to guide them to learn self-care methods to maintain and promote mental health. [Access the platform](#)

The tobacco quitting helpline can be reached from 9:00 to 15:00 by dialing 4030 and extension 5. All calls are free of charge.

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