

Tobacco consumption and control in the Eastern Mediterranean region: Profile and research challenges

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Tobacco consumption is global epidemic, with special high rates in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR), which covers all Arab countries, in addition to Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. While several studies and surveys documented the high prevalence among adult males, more recent ones (including GYTS and GATS) indicate new waves of high consumption among several other population sub-groups, including school children (of both genders) and adult females. Nevertheless, the EMR epidemic seems to mostly affect adult males, especially in countries as Egypt, Tunisia and Gulf Cooperation Council countries (including Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, UAE and Qatar), as far documentation (reported smoking status rates) is concerned. Applying the WHO-POWER model of tobacco control to EMR situation, several indications and challenges in its implementation become apparent. These include: feasibility of time trend studies; under-estimates of female tobacco use; difficulties in accessibility to certain population sub-groups; feasibility of implementation trials; few EMR states implemented some nationwide WHO/CDC surveys, especially GATS. Nevertheless, we have to emphasize that tobacco research provides EMR evidence for policy makers of cost-effectiveness of implementing control measures, including different MPOWER recommendations. It also provides media with information helpful in raising awareness of population sub-groups, especially youngsters, of impacts of tobacco use on one hand, and effectiveness of control measures on the other.

Biography

Ahmed Mandil is the Professor of Epidemiology & Supervisor, Community Medicine, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia (seconded from Institute of Public Health, Egypt). He received his MBChB (1981) from Alexandria University, Egypt; DrPH from UCLA School of Public Health, USA (1991). He was IEA Secretary (2002-2008) and serves as peer reviewer of scientific Journals including: *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, *Journal of Epidemiology & Global Health* and *Journal of Family & Community Medicine*. He consulted international agencies as: WHO, UNICEF, Population Council. He also contributed to WHO publications as: Non-Communicable Disease national capacity assessment survey (2001); Emergency Preparedness and Response national capacity assessment survey (2008).

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