



Press release

World Heart Federation launches a campaign to protect non- smokers from heart disease

February 25th 2003, Geneva, The World Heart Federation, an NGO dedicated to the prevention of heart disease and stroke, will launch a campaign against passive smoking today at the Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, led by the World Health Organization.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death worldwide, resulting in 17 million, or one in three deaths. Smoking is a major CVD risk in both men and women and passive smoking is now proven to be a cause of CVD, increasing the coronary death rate among non-smokers by up to 70 per cent and significantly increases the risk of stroke¹.

Approximately 1.1 billion² or a third of the adult population is estimated to smoke, resulting in a large part of the global population suffering passive smoke during their daily lives, at home, in the office, in transportation as well as in public areas. The World Health Organization estimates that 700 million children are passive smokers. Women are particularly at risk of passive smoke. In China, for example, a survey showed that almost 60 per cent of non-smoking women were exposed to tobacco smoke³. In South Africa, 70 per cent of pregnant women lived with at least one smoker in the house⁴.

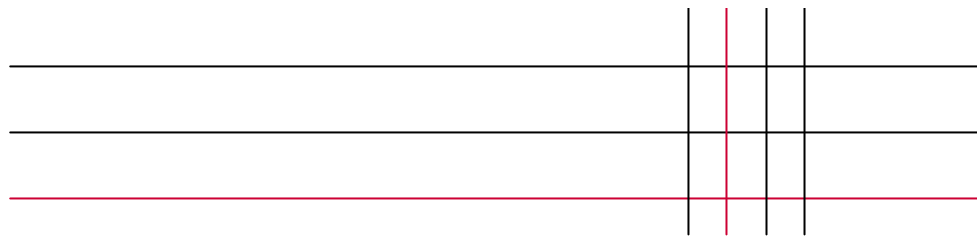
"Passive smoking is a major preventable cause of death," said Dr Elinor Wilson, World Heart Federation. "We are launching this anti-passive smoking campaign, *"Smoking hurts more people than just smokers,"* to encourage the world's population to initiate a smoke-free environment.

The non-smokers' rights are recognised in the Convention and it is now time to start focusing on their implementation. The World Heart Federation will also call on its 167 member societies of cardiology and heart foundations from 100 countries to establish national tobacco control strategies and for companies and governments to enforce preventative measures against passive smoking, especially within developing countries," said Dr Elinor Wilson, World Heart Federation. "CVD deaths will increase dramatically if no measures are taken."

"The World Heart Federation supports the objectives of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke. Measures have to be taken to protect everyone," she added.

The World Heart Federation's advice to stop passive smoking:

- Convince smokers to smoke outside or in a dedicated place, and help them to quit smoking
- Initiate a smoke-free work place, (guidelines for smoke-free workplaces are available via the World Health Organization web site: www.who.org)
- Politely ask people not to smoke near you and especially not next to children, explain to them that smoking tobacco puts them at risk as well as you



- In many countries, smoking is controlled in public places and at work. Contact your country health organisation to ask questions
- Tell your friends and family about the risks of passive smoking

-Ends-

Editor's Notes

World Heart Federation and tobacco control

World Heart Federation, with 167 societies of cardiology and heart foundations from 100 countries supports a total ban on tobacco advertising and promotion including sponsorship and other forms of indirect advertising. The World Heart Federation also encourages governments to use strong price and tax measures in order to reduce the demand for tobacco. For more information visit <http://www.worldheart.org/advocacy/tobacco.html>

The World Heart Federation

The World Heart Federation is a Non-Governmental Organization based in Geneva and dedicated to the prevention and control of cardiovascular diseases around the world. The Federation is committed to helping the global population achieve a longer and better life through prevention and control of heart disease and stroke, with a particular focus on low and middle-income countries. The World Heart Federation is comprised of 167 member societies of cardiology and heart foundations from 98 countries and continental members covering the regions of Asia-Pacific, Europe, East Mediterranean, the Americas and Africa.

For further information visit <http://worldheartday.com> and visit <http://www.worldheart.org/advocacy/tobacco.html>

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¹ JAMA 2001 Jul25;286(4):436-41

² WHO, Women and the tobacco epidemic, 2002

³ Yang GH et al, 1996

⁴ Steyn K et al. S Afr Med J 1997; 87: 460-3.

