FACING THE FACTS: THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC DISEASE IN PAKISTAN

Chronic diseases are the major cause of death and disability worldwide. In Pakistan, chronic diseases are projected to account for 42% of all deaths (see below).

Projected deaths by cause, all ages, Pakistan, 2005

- Cardiovascular disease: 22%
- Communicable, maternal and perinatal, nutritional deficiencies: 30%
- Injuries: 8%
- Cancer: 6%
- Other chronic diseases: 8%
- Chronic respiratory disease: 5%
- Diabetes: 1%

Total projected deaths in Pakistan, 2005 = 1,392,000

Total projected chronic disease-related deaths in Pakistan, 2005 = 588,000

WHO projects that in Pakistan, over the next 10 years:

- Over 6 million people will die from a chronic disease.
- Deaths from infectious diseases, maternal and perinatal conditions, and nutritional deficiencies combined will decrease by 12%.
- Deaths from chronic diseases will increase by 27% - most markedly, deaths from diabetes will increase by 51%.

The data presented in this information sheet were estimated by WHO using standard methods to maximize cross-country comparability. They are not necessarily the official statistics of Member States.

Raised body mass index (overweight and obesity) is an important cause of chronic disease. Prevalence of overweight in Pakistan is expected to increase in both men and women over the next 10 years (see below).

**Projected prevalence of overweight, Pakistan, males and females aged 30 years or more, 2005 and 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men 2005</th>
<th>Men 2015</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overweight (%)</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not overweight (%)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women 2005</th>
<th>Women 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overweight (%)</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not overweight (%)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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</table>

**Economic impact**

Chronic diseases create large adverse – and underappreciated – economic effects on families, communities and countries. In 2005 alone, it is estimated that Pakistan will lose 1 billion dollars in national income from premature deaths due to heart disease, stroke and diabetes (reported in international dollars to account for differences in purchasing power between countries). These losses are projected to continue to increase: cumulatively, Pakistan stands to lose 31 billion dollars over the next 10 years from premature deaths due to heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

**Solutions**

At least 80% of premature heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, and 40% of cancer could be prevented through healthy diet, regular physical activity and avoidance of tobacco products. Cost-effective interventions exist, and have worked in many countries: the most successful strategies have employed a range of population-wide approaches combined with interventions for individuals.

WHO estimates that a 2% annual reduction in chronic disease death rates in Pakistan would result in an economic gain of 1 billion dollars for the country over the next 10 years.

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1 An international dollar is a hypothetical currency that is used as a means of translating and comparing costs from one country to the other using a common reference point, the US dollar. An international dollar has the same purchasing power as the US dollar has in the United States.