

FOREWORD



Chronic respiratory diseases, such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, kill more than four million people every year and affect hundreds of millions more. These diseases erode the health and well-being of the patients and have a negative impact on families and societies. Women and children are particularly vulnerable, especially those in low and middle income countries, where they are exposed on a daily basis to indoor air pollution from solid fuels for cooking and heating. In high income countries, tobacco is the most important risk factor for chronic respiratory diseases, and in some of these countries, tobacco use among women and young people is still increasing.

WHO recently launched the Global Alliance against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD). Spearheaded by WHO, GARD brings together the combined knowledge of national and international organizations, institutions and agencies to improve the lives of millions of people affected by chronic respiratory diseases.

Global Surveillance, prevention and control of chronic respiratory diseases: a comprehensive approach raises awareness of the huge impact of chronic respiratory diseases worldwide, and highlights the risk factors as well as ways to prevent and treat these diseases.

I hope that this publication will serve not only as a source of information, but also as inspiration to those who want to join the battle against chronic respiratory diseases. By addressing this global epidemic, much suffering can be avoided and millions of lives can be saved.

Dr Catherine Le Galès-Camus

WHO Assistant Director-General,
Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health