Health Literacy for NCD prevention, management and prompting equality

How to use health literacy to improve understanding and responses to NCDs?

WHO Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs
Working Group 3.3

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"We, Heads of State and Government, assembled at the United Nations on 19 and 20 September 2011, acknowledge that the global burden and threat of non-communicable diseases constitutes one of the major challenges for development in the 21st century"

Paragraph 1 – Resolution A/RES/66/2
WHO's strategy to raise the priority accorded to NCDs on global agendas

2011
Moscow Declaration

2011
Political Declaration

2014
Outcome Document

2015
AAAA

2015
SDGs

2018
3rd HLM
Historic crossroads: NCDs included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
Commits governments to develop national responses:

- **Target 3.4:** By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from NCDs through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing

- **Target 3.5:** Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol

- **Target 3.8:** Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- **Target 3.a:** Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate.

- **Target 3.b:** Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and NCDs that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all.
### What are NCDs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noncommunicable diseases</th>
<th>Causative risk factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tobacco use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease and stroke</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chronic lung disease</td>
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NCDs - one of the major challenges for development in the 21st century

DAH and Disease Burden by Health Area

Note: excludes health systems and non-allocable DAH
Why Health Literacy for NCDs?

- 38 million deaths each year due to NCDs, of which 16 million are premature deaths (WHO, 2015). These premature deaths can largely be prevented.

- 28 million deaths in LMICs (WHO, 2015).

- Need to make daily health-related decisions for both prevention and management of NCDs.

- Thus, Health Literacy holds the key to living a healthy life.
Opportunities and challenges for Health Literacy in Youth

- Survey to understand the opportunities, challenges, and basic understanding of health literacy for NCD prevention among youth.

- Terms used:
  
  **Noncommunicable diseases**: In this context, we are referring to principally cancer, heart diseases and stroke, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases

  **Risk factors**: In this context, we are referring to common risk factors for NCDs such as physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, harmful use of alcohol, tobacco use.
Survey Results

- Demographics (n=31)

- Gender: 16 Males, 15 Females
- Age (years): 13 19-22, 13 23-26, 5 27-30
- Country of residence: 14 Ethiopia, 1 Uganda, 1 India, 3 Mexico, 4 Rwanda, 5 United States, 5 Kenya
Survey Results

- Demographics (n=31)

**Level of education**
- High school: 2
- Diploma: 4
- Undergraduate/bachelors degree: 23
- University – Postgraduate Masters degree: 2

**Current employment status**
- Student (full time): 15
- Student (part time): 4
- Working full time: 10
- Working part time: 2
Concept of NCDs

Self-rated understanding of NCDs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-rated Understanding</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ability to explain the concept of NCDs to friends and/or family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence Level</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all confident</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly confident</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat confident</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very confident</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n=31)
Major challenge perceived in understanding of NCDs

- Limited access to relevant information on noncommunicable diseases: 15 respondents
- They are not a part of the curriculum either at the school or university level: 8 respondents
- They affect older people, usually above the age of 40: 3 respondents
- The definition of noncommunicable diseases is complicated: 3 respondents
- They are too scientific to understand: 2 respondents

(n=31)
Best way to increase young people’s understanding of NCDs

- Increasing access to relevant information on noncommunicable diseases and their risk factors through social media (10 respondents)
- Including noncommunicable diseases as a part of the school curriculum (7 respondents)
- Simplify current material available on noncommunicable diseases and its risk factors by using clear language and pictures (6 respondents)
- Capacity building workshops on noncommunicable diseases and risk factors with experts (4 respondents)
- Having mass communication campaigns delivering key messages in a simple manner (4 respondents)
- Creating free online courses on noncommunicable diseases that can be accessed anytime (4 respondents)

(n=31)
Government efforts to increase people’s awareness and understanding about NCDs and their risk factors

- Offering screening services for noncommunicable diseases free of cost/at subsidized cost
- Online resources available via government website such as Ministry of Health website
- Running a campaign on noncommunicable diseases and their risk factors using mass media channels such as books, magazines, newspapers, radio, television
- Running a campaign on noncommunicable diseases and their risk factors using digital media such as through mobile phones, twitter, facebook, instagram
- Regular training of healthcare providers and community health workers
- Increased policies to improve prevention of noncommunicable diseases such as increasing taxes on sugary beverages or banning smoking in public places
- Provision of health-facility based informational resources such as flyers and brochures
- Organizing public lectures and discussion fora to sensitize people about noncommunicable diseases and their risk factors
- Increased policies to improve treatment of noncommunicable diseases (e.g. prioritizing NCD medicines and treatment modalities)
- Increasing government funding for prevention and care for noncommunicable diseases
Ways in which young people can be involved in improving understanding of NCDs and its risk factors in their community/country

- Leadership programs for young people to initiate health promotion activities in their local communities/family/schools
- Involving youth as members in local, national, and global committees working on NCD prevention and control
- Participating in planning and execution of NCD awareness campaigns, specially through social media
Best buys

WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020

**Best buys**

**Tobacco**
- Reduce affordability of tobacco products by increasing tobacco excise taxes
- Create by law completely smoke-free environments in all indoor workplaces, public places and public transport
- Warn people of the dangers of tobacco and tobacco smoke through effective health warnings and mass media campaigns
- Ban all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

**Harmful use of alcohol**
- Regulate commercial and public availability of alcohol
- Restrict or ban alcohol advertising and promotions
- Use pricing policies such as excise tax increases on alcoholic beverages
Best buys

Diet and physical activity
- Reduce salt intake
- Replace trans fats with polyunsaturated fats
- Implement public awareness programmes on diet and physical activity
- Promote and protect breastfeeding

Cardiovascular diseases and diabetes
- Drug therapy (including glycaemic control for diabetes mellitus and control of hypertension using a total risk approach) and counselling to individuals who have had a heart attack or stroke and to persons with high risk (≥30%) of a fatal and nonfatal cardiovascular event in the next 10 years
- Acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) for acute myocardial infarction
Best buys

Cancer
- Prevention of liver cancer through hepatitis B immunization
- Prevention of cervical cancer through screening (visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA) linked with timely treatment of pre-cancerous lesions
Health Literacy is a cross-cutting theme across all ‘Best Buys’
Health Literacy for NCD prevention and management
1. Intervention development

- Assessment of Health literacy level in countries
- Obtain data which is context specific and context relevant to different geographical locations and populations
- Use data to address different risk factors of NCDs by developing context specific interventions
2. Impacting behavior change

Health information on NCDs

Access

Effective use

Empowerment

Behavior change
3. Influencing policy-level change

- Health literacy outcomes: Means of patient and public engagement in health decision making
- Evidence generation
- Support policy-level decision making
Considering the context of shortage of human resources for health, particularly the LMICs, task shifting is key to address the scope of the NCD problem.

Integration of CHWs to tackle NCDs is the need of the hour.

Capacity building of CHWs – Health Literacy for NCDs
Why CHWs?

- An integral part of the community – can have more impact on improving equity in NCD prevention and care.
- Reach to otherwise underserved populations across rural and urban settings worldwide.
- Apply their deep understanding of local population needs in their roles as service extension workers and agents of social change.
5. Youth engagement

- Advocacy for NCDs at the local, national and international level – engagement with youth driven organizations.

- Why youth?
  - Two-thirds of premature deaths in adults due to NCDs are associated with childhood conditions and behaviors.
  - Are the targets of by companies advertising unhealthy food, tobacco or alcohol use -- social and environmental determinants of health.
  - As a future generation will bear the burden of these diseases.
International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations

- One of the world’s oldest and largest student-run organizations focusing on global health.

- Members: Medical students across 119 countries

- 1.3 million student members

- IFMSA unites medical students for global health and equips them with the resources, skills and knowledge to take on health leadership roles locally and globally to shape a healthy and sustainable future.
Engaging medical students on NCDs through NCD youth caucus in Budhva in March, 2017

Preceding WHO GCM/NCDs Global Dialogue meeting in October, 2017

Outcome: The Budhva Declaration – A call to action summarizing the challenges, stance and actions needed from youth, including young medical professionals, to tackle NCDs.
A global nonprofit that works to mobilize young leaders worldwide to take action against social injustice driven by non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and mental illness.

Members: Public health professionals, doctors, lawyers, nutritionists, sociologists, anthropologists and many more disciplines.

6000+ members in 160 countries
Creating an online Community of Practice on “NCDs and Youth”.

Audience: Students and early career professionals working on/interested in reducing the global burden of NCDs.

Purpose: To create an active, dynamic and transparent platform for knowledge and idea sharing, networking, action planning and collaborative learning between young people engaged in the prevention and control of NCDs globally, in order to advance engagement of the next generation in discussions and actions toward the attainment of WHO global NCD targets.
Community awareness event on World Cancer Day

YP-CDN Kenya Chapter partnered with the Ministry of Health, Kenya
Thank You

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