

*a world where all
people
breathe
freely*



Hundreds of millions of people suffer from chronic respiratory diseases (CRDs). Currently 300 million people have asthma, 210 million people have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) while millions of others suffer from other often undiagnosed CRDs. The World Health Organization estimates that, in 2005, some four million people died of CRDs. Deaths will increase in the next 20 years, if urgent action is not taken. The Global Alliance against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD) was formed to help control this global epidemic.

IN 2005, 4 MILLION PEOPLE DIED OF CHRONIC RESPIRATORY DISEASES

What are Chronic Respiratory Diseases?

Chronic Respiratory Diseases (CRDs) are chronic diseases of the airways and other structures of the lung. Some of the most common are asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), allergic rhinitis, occupational lung diseases, sleep apnea and pulmonary hypertension.

The most important risk factors for preventable CRDs are:

- » **Tobacco smoking**
- » **Indoor air pollution**
- » **Outdoor pollution**
- » **Allergens**
- » **Exposure to occupational hazards**

What is the Global Alliance against Chronic Respiratory Diseases?

The Global Alliance against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD) contributes to the World Health Organization's global work to prevent and control chronic diseases. GARD is a voluntary alliance of national and international organizations, institutions and agencies from a wide range of countries working towards the common goal of reducing the global burden of CRDs.

GARD was launched on 28 March 2006 in Beijing, People's Republic of China. GARD's main objective is to initiate a comprehensive approach to fight CRDs. This involves:

- » **developing a standard way of obtaining relevant data on the burden of CRD and their risk factors;**
- » **advocating for action on CRDs;**
- » **encouraging countries to implement policies for health promotion and prevention of CRDs; and**
- » **developing simple and affordable strategies for management of CRDs.**

GARD also promotes an integrated approach of CRDs with other chronic diseases.

Through its vision - **a world where all people breathe freely** - GARD focuses specifically on the needs of low- and middle-income countries and vulnerable populations, and fosters country-specific initiatives that are tailored to local needs and primary health care.

What does the Global Alliance offer?

GARD provides a network through which collaborating parties from different sectors of society can achieve results that no single partner could attain alone. GARD also improves coordination between existing governmental and nongovernmental programmes, thereby minimizing duplication of effort and wasting of resources. Within this framework, GARD focuses on the following areas:

Surveillance of chronic respiratory diseases and their risk factors

GARD is developing a standardized process for collecting data on CRD risk factors, disease burden, trends, quality and affordability of care, as well as the economic burden imposed on families and countries alike. Standardized data will support the creation of comparable estimates across countries, and will help policy makers to prioritize actions and assess the impact of their interventions.

Advocacy for action

To effectively address the global epidemic of CRDs, they must be made a public health priority in all countries. GARD will work to increase awareness and strengthen commitment for action across a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, the media, the general public, health care professionals (including those in schools and workplaces), affected individuals and the private sector.

Health promotion and prevention

GARD will advise on the implementation of policies to reduce exposure to tobacco smoke, indoor and outdoor pollution, occupational hazards and other risk factors for CRDs.

Diagnosis of chronic respiratory diseases

GARD will recommend and promote simple, available and affordable diagnostic tools for CRDs; and it will provide training for health-care professionals on proper diagnosis of these conditions.

Control of chronic respiratory diseases and drug accessibility

GARD will improve the control of CRDs and related allergies through developing, validating and facilitating the implementation of simple and affordable approaches; and it will provide training for health professionals that is appropriate for each country's needs, priorities, health care systems and resources.

Pediatric asthma

GARD will develop a simple and accurate asthma education plan to improve the skills for identifying and managing asthma in childhood. This plan will be aimed at patients and caregivers, as well as all health-care personnel.

How can you get involved?

GARD welcomes new collaborating parties. To learn more about GARD activities and how you can become involved, please contact us or visit our website.

www.who.int/gard



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