

World No Tobacco Day “Tobacco and heart disease”

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Since 1987, on May 31 every year, the World Health Organization organises the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) to increase awareness of risks associated with tobacco consumption. The Health Promotion Foundation (HPF) was one of the first Polish NGOs to organise anti-tobacco actions accompanying the WNTD in Poland. Since then, WNTD has become a permanent fixture of the public health calendar in Poland. The celebrations have become an important element of building the health literacy of Poles in respect to smoking harm and cessation methods. Today, the HPF, alongside many other NGOs, as well as the District Sanitary-Epidemiological Stations, continue the tradition of conducting special events for WNTD [1].

This year the main theme of WNTD was tobacco and cardiovascular diseases. It is worth remembering that the absolute cardiovascular disease morbidity is the highest of all tobacco-related diseases. Despite the huge progress made in tobacco control in Poland, millions of Poles continue to smoke. Among them are those who have cardiovascular conditions, or even suffered a heart attack, which leads to a dramatic increase in the risk of another cardiac failure. The awareness of the direct link between smoking and poor cardiovascular health remains very low among Poles. This is one of the challenges public health advocates need to face in the coming years.

This year the World Health Organization issue the following statement to accompany WNTD:

“The theme of the World No Tobacco Day 2018 is ‘Tobacco and heart disease’. The campaign will increase awareness of the:

- link between tobacco and heart and other cardiovascular diseases, including stroke, which combined are the world’s leading cause of death;
- available measures that governments and the public can take to reduce the risks to cardiovascular health posed by tobacco”.

World No Tobacco Day 2018 coincides with a range of global initiatives aimed at addressing the tobacco epidemic and its impact on public health, particularly in causing the premature mortality and suffering of

millions of people globally. These actions include the WHO-supported Global Hearts and RESOLVE actions, which aim to reduce cardiovascular disease deaths and improve care, and the third United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of NCDs [2].

Rising the public awareness of the impact of smoking on cardiovascular diseases is an urgent public health problem. CVD is the second cause of death in the European Union. According to the HEM – Closing the Gap project in the beginning of 2000s, among men aged 45-64 years, 39% of tobacco-attributable deaths in the Central and Eastern European countries (CEE)¹ resulted from cancer and 46% from cardiovascular diseases, while in the Western part of European Union (WE)² 52% of tobacco-attributable deaths were from cancer and 30% were from cardiovascular diseases. The same pattern (a larger contribution of cardiovascular deaths in the CEE countries and of cancer deaths in the WE countries) was observed among women (CEE countries: 40% and 49%; WE countries: 49% and 27% respectively) [3].

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DISCLOSURE

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References

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2. WHO World No Tobacco Day 2018. Available from: <http://www.who.int/campaigns/no-tobacco-day/2018/event/en/> (accessed: 15 May 2018).
3. Zatoński W and the HEM Project team. Closing the health gap in European Union. Cancer Center and Institute, Warsaw 2008.

¹ ‘New’ member states of the European Union after enlargement in May 2004 (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary).

² ‘Old’ member states of the EU.