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Developing and Implementing Smoking Cessation Intervention in Nepal

A behaviour change intervention to decrease tobacco use in Nepal

Project Objectives:

- To develop and test the feasibility of a behavioural support intervention to promote smoking cessation within the in primary care in Nepal

Team Members:

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Project Summary

Prevalence of tobacco among those over 15 years is estimated to be 31.6% overall, 52% among men and 13% among women. Use of smokeless tobacco is also high, particularly chewing tobacco, with 38% of men and 6% of women using this form of tobacco. Despite this high smoking prevalence there are no smoking cessation services in routine primary care. Respiratory conditions are one of the most common reasons for presenting at primary care with 17.1% of male patients and 11.3% of female patients having a respiratory condition. There is evidence of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of number of psychological and pharmacological treatments for tobacco dependence, particularly where advice is given by trained health professionals.

Methods

The study used a combination of qualitative methods and action research to understand the barriers and facilitators to implementation. Patients receiving the intervention were followed up over a 3 month period to gain their feedback on the intervention and to identify those who had quit.

Setting

The intervention was tested in 3 primary health care centres (PHCCs) selected based on sufficient patient flow, training of staff in WHO's Practical Approach to Lung Health. 2 PHCCs were in a rural location in the Terai plains and 1 PHCC was in urban Kathmandu.

Action Research

To understand the barriers and facilitators for implementing a smoking cessation intervention in primary care, researchers facilitated action research meetings with the health workers in the 3 PHCCs. The groups reflected on the implementation process and tried different strategies to overcome any challenges over the initial 3 month period after which the adapted intervention was implemented for the period of 6 months

Intervention

Intervention design drew on initial qualitative work with smokers with respiratory conditions and focus groups with health workers. Ministry of Health and Population staff participated in a design workshop and ultimately endorsed all materials. Training was provided to all the health workers in their facilities.

Findings

- It is feasible to implement a smoking cessation intervention in primary health care centres, particularly if the intervention is targeted at those patients who are motivated to quit.
- 37% of smokers who received the intervention were able to quit smoking following the intervention.
- Use of various IEC materials makes the behaviour support intervention more effective. For staff, the flipbook makes the counselling session with patients more structured and effective; the leaflet, as well as providing information, also serves as a good reminder for patients.
- Integrating smoking cessation within routine primary health care helps deliver the intervention effectively. It also increases the likelihood of helping people to stop smoking.



An IEC material used during counselling session

