

## **Press Release**

### **On This World Heart Day**

## **Let your Heart live, Quit Smoking**

Islamabad - September, 2017. The lax and ineffective health regulations and limited or no corporate accountability have placed a large number of people in Pakistan on higher risk of coronary heart disease, says TheNetwork for Consumer Protection while commemorating World Heart day with the theme 'share the power' as small changes, such as eating a healthy diet, getting more exercise and giving up smoking, can make a powerful difference to heart health and inspire millions of people around the world to be heart healthy.

At least 12 Pakistanis die every hour due to heart attack while more than one third (34 per cent) of all deaths in Pakistan are caused by cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), making it the leading non-communicable disease in the country. Pakistani population has one of the highest risks of coronary heart disease (CHD) in the world. In Pakistan, 30 to 40 per cent of all deaths are due to cardiovascular diseases (CVD). The CHD deaths in Pakistan have reached about 200,000 per year that is 410/100,000 of the population.

The major risk factors are tobacco use, alcohol use, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, physical inactivity, stress and unhealthy diet. "The more risk factors you have the greater is the likelihood that you will suffer heart disease, unless you take action to modify your risk factors and work to prevent them compromising your health.

"Mr. Nadeem Iqbal, CEO TheNetwork, a leading CSO working on Tobacco Control in Pakistan articulated on the eve of the "International Heart Day", roughly one out of five deaths from heart disease is directly linked to smoking. The nicotine in cigarettes raises your blood pressure and shoots your heart rate. It is crucial to ban smoking in your home to protect your families' future. Educate children on the dangers of tobacco use, to help them to choose not to smoke themselves. Stopping smoking is the single best thing you can do to improve heart health"

"Tobacco in every form is very harmful to health. If you start smoking at an early age, your risk of cardiovascular disease is much higher than someone who starts as an adult. Exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke is also dangerous. The risk of heart attack and stroke starts to drop immediately after a person stops using tobacco products, and can drop by as much as half after 1 year. As a policy suggestion, Pakistan needs to develop and adopt a national NCD policy. "said Nadeem.

Children are vulnerable too; the risk for CVDs can begin before birth during fetal development, and increase further during childhood with exposure to unhealthy diets, lack of exercise and smoking. Low birth weight – common among poor families in Pakistan – is an important risk factor for NCDs in adults. Multiple risk factors such as obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and

glucose frequently occur in the same person. Most cardiovascular diseases can be prevented by addressing behavioral risk factors such as tobacco use, unhealthy diet and obesity, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol using population-wide strategies.

According to British Heart Foundation, Smokers are almost twice as likely to have a heart attack compared with people who have never smoked. Stopping smoking has huge benefits and it's never too late to give up. By quitting you'll be improving your own health by dramatically reducing your risk of coronary heart disease, stroke and a variety of cancers. You'll feel better, and have more money to spend on other things that you enjoy. Smoking increases the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, which includes coronary heart disease and stroke. Smoking damages the lining of your arteries, leading to a buildup of fatty material (atheroma) which narrows the artery. This can cause angina, a heart attack or a stroke. When non-smokers breathe in second-hand smoke - also known as passive smoking - it can be harmful. Research shows that exposure to second hand tobacco smoke is a cause of heart disease in non-smokers, which means you could be harming the health of your children, partner and friends.

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