

## Stop TB in my life; Pakistan ranks 6th with high tuberculosis prevalence

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**ISLAMABAD: On world TB day The Network for Consumer Protection has raised the alarm that the higher incidence of smoking among children is making more vulnerable to higher incidence of TB in Pakistan.**

World TB Day 2012 is being celebrated to revive the commitments to control TB endemic with the theme "Stop TB in My Life" on March 24th. Tobacco use is strongly associated with different diseases like TB and cancer to end the life.

Youth is 63% of population of Pakistan. Underage tobacco sale is growing rapidly due to poor implementation of tobacco control policies which are increasing the risks of youth to get hooked regular tobacco use and tuberculosis. Similarly, horrific pictures on cigarette packs which are proven to reduce tobacco users especially among youth are yet pending to be revised. Government of Pakistan needs to delay no more time and revise the pictorial health warning on cigarette packs, said Nadeem Iqbal Executive Coordinator TheNetwork for Consumer Protection.

According to health experts, there is also association between smoking and TB which is supported by substantial body of epidemiological evidence gathered over the past 50 years. The evidence shows that smoking is a risk factor for TB infection and for the development of pulmonary TB. Hundred million people around the world smoke hukka, shisha or cigarette and the habit is becoming endemic in our part of world and increasing the risks of TB infection, the risk of progression from infection to disease and the risk of death among TB patient.

The day once again alarms about a growing health emergency in Pakistan since TB remains responsible for 5.1 percent of total national disease burden in Pakistan, said Nadeem Iqbal, Executive Coordinator of TheNetwork for Consumer Protection.

Health experts agreed that nearly 61% TB death are attributable to smoking. Among children living with a patient with active pulmonary TB, passive smoking accelerates the development of active TB. Further, the risk of prevalence of TB infection is more among current or ex smokers than never smokers. The risk of TB is more with the duration of smoking than the number of cigarettes smoked daily.

World TB Day on March 24th, 2012 is a reminder for Government of Pakistan to create awareness about the fatal diseases, there is danger of TB spread fast by 2015 in Pakistan. The spread of this disease needs to be checked on a priority basis as it is responsible for 1.8 million deaths annually which mean around 4500 deaths per day.

The third world countries were witnessing resurgence in the disease due to a lack of political will to root out the disease as well as meager spending by Governments.