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Strategic Framework



- 5.1 For efficient and cost-effective tackling of the NCD epidemic, a strategic framework will be required, both to promote the well-being of the population and also inculcate healthy behaviours. In this connection, DH held an expert group meeting entitled "Establishing a Strategic Framework on Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases" on 3 September 2005. Over 40 participants from academic, business, education, healthcare and social sectors, other government departments and NGOs attended the meeting to map out a strategic framework on prevention and control of NCD in Hong Kong (Exhibit 39).

Exhibit 39: Sharing views and knowledge



"...we have not neglected the significance of NCD or chronic diseases that have placed an enormous health and economic burden on the population... what we need now is an organised approach for tackling NCD", Dr PY Lam, Director of Health remarked.

Principle

- 5.2 Based on WHO's Global Strategy for Prevention and Control of NCD, the principles for establishing the strategy are —
- shared responsibility across the Government, professional groups, non-government agencies, business sector and the community;
 - diversity in approach, targeting the whole population, specific population subgroups and individuals most at risk;
 - concentrating on promotion, prevention and early intervention; and
 - evidence-based, outcome-focused and addressing health determinants.

Scope

- 5.3 In Hong Kong, a limited number of NCD account for a significant proportion of disease burden on the community and healthcare system. At the same time, several risk factors work together to predispose and give rise to these diseases. Accumulated knowledge and experience in health promotion and disease prevention shows that strategically focused interventions on a "cluster" of modifiable behavioural risk factors and environmental determinants can induce parallel changes in those biomedical risk factors, thereby reduce the risk of developing NCD. To optimise health gains, this strategic framework will focus on the major risk factors that are potentially preventable or modifiable and have significant impact on the health of the Hong Kong population (Exhibit 40 and 41).

Exhibit 40: Scope of the NCD prevention and control framework

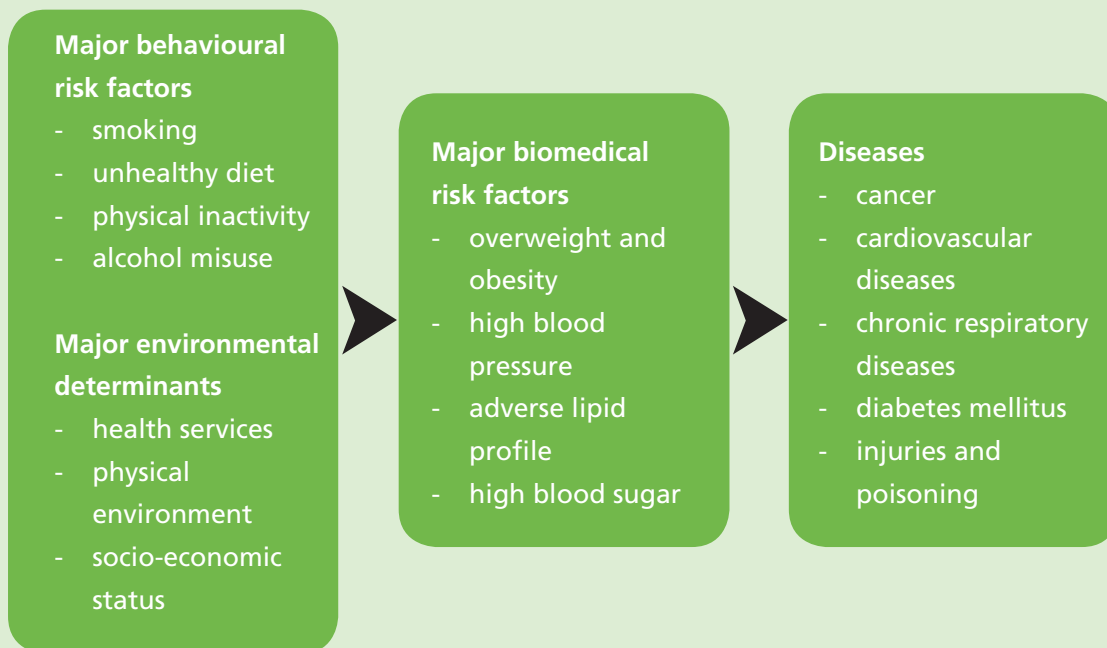


Exhibit 41: Facts on selected risk factors and NCD

Air Pollution and Respiratory Diseases

Ambient air pollutants include a wide range of particulates and gases. Air pollution in Hong Kong is mainly caused by emissions from local motor vehicles/power plants and from industries/power plants in the vicinity. The impact of air pollution on respiratory system has been widely recognised. Studies have reported that significant associations were found between hospital admissions for chronic respiratory diseases and the concentration level of respirable suspended particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and ozone.¹ Another epidemiological study found a reduction of chronic bronchitis symptoms and bronchial hyper-responsiveness in young children after the enforcement of regulations for controlling the concentration level of sulphur dioxide in ambient air.²

Alcohol and Injuries

Alcohol misuse not only contributes to adverse health effects, but also to intentional injuries (e.g. suicide), unintentional injuries (e.g. road traffic accidents, falls) and social problems. Alcohol misuse is involved in a quarter of intentional injury death cases annually. For all unintentional injury deaths, 40-60% of all injury deaths are attributed to alcohol consumption.³ A local epidemiological study on all motor vehicle deaths in 1999 found that one in ten (10.3%) accidents had involved alcohol.⁴

Diet and CVD

The WHO recommends intake of a minimum of 400 gram of fruit and vegetables per day for the prevention of NCD, including heart diseases and stroke. Low fruit and vegetables intake, a common dietary pattern in developed areas, is now among the top ten risk factors contributing to global mortality. Worldwide, low intake of fruit and vegetables is estimated to cause about 31% of ischaemic heart disease and 11% of stroke.⁵

Physical Activity and Diabetes Mellitus

To maintain health, the WHO recommends people to engage in not less than 30 minutes of physical activity of moderate intensity every day, or at least on most days of the week.⁶ There is strong epidemiological evidence for the protective effect of physical activity against developing type 2 diabetes mellitus.⁷

Smoking and Cancer

Lighting up cigarettes will release many chemicals such as tar, nicotine, carbon monoxide etc, which cause harm to the entire respiratory system. Compared to non-smokers, men who smoke are about 23 times more likely to develop lung cancer and women who smoke are about 13 times more likely so. Smoking causes about 90% of lung cancer deaths in men and almost 80% in women. Smoking is also associated with cancers of the oral cavity, larynx, pharynx, esophagus and bladder. For smoking-attributable cancers, the risk generally increases with the number of cigarettes smoked and the number of years of smoking, and generally decreases after quitting completely.⁸

Vision

- 5.4 Having a clear vision is essential to any strategy as it provides focus and also serves to remind people of the long-term purposes of their work. With successful implementation of the strategic framework, it is envisioned that Hong Kong will have a **well-informed population** that is able to take responsibility for their own health, a **caring community** that integrates public and private sectors to ensure healthy choices for the public, a **competent healthcare profession** that views health promotion and preventive medicine as priorities, and a **sustainable healthcare system** that incorporates strong elements of health promotion, disease prevention and curative care for our people, thereby **significantly reducing the toll of disease burden including disability and premature death related to NCD**.

Goal

- 5.5 For the above vision to be realised, the goals of this NCD strategic framework would be to —
- create an environment conducive to promoting health;
 - engage the population in promoting their own health as well as the health of their families and communities;
 - prevent and/or delay the onset of NCD for individuals and population groups;
 - reduce the progression and complications of NCD;
 - reduce avoidable hospital admissions and healthcare procedures; and
 - provide high quality care for NCD in healthcare settings in order to maintain health and halt disease progression.

Strategic Direction

5.6 To achieve the set goals, six strategic directions have been identified for focusing the attention, resources and actions at areas in where investments in NCD prevention and control can bring the greatest return in terms of health outcomes.

Direction 1: Support new and strengthen existing health promotion and NCD prevention initiatives or activities that are in line with this strategy

Key actions will include —

- fostering implementation of territory-wide health promotion programmes such as "healthy eating", "active living" and "tackling overweight";
- mobilising resources and providing support for key NGOs in health promotion and NCD prevention; and
- supporting setting-based integrated approaches to health promotion and disease prevention, e.g. health promoting schools, smoke-free public places, healthy workplaces and healthy cities.

Direction 2: Generate an effective information base and system to guide action across the disease pathway

Key actions will include —

- building on existing knowledge management systems to ensure that evidence and information will be readily available to promote best practices among the healthcare providers;
- developing a systematic health information dissemination strategy to further empower individuals with health knowledge;
- improving surveillance of NCD and track changes in the risk profile and health determinants of the population; and
- supporting sound research on issues relating to health promotion and NCD prevention policies.

Direction 3: Strengthen partnership and foster engagement of all relevant stakeholders

Key actions will include —

- fostering public-private partnerships, engaging the civil society and networking all stakeholders to identify opportunities for collaboration;

- involving and engaging all levels of the Government, local communities and the public to create an environment conducive to the promotion of healthy behaviours;
- forming specific working groups to advise on priority actions required in specific areas of prevention, and also to provide strategic governance; and
- adopting setting approach to schools, workplaces, hospitals etc. and also to promote healthy cities.

Direction 4: Build the capacity and capability to combat NCD

Key actions will include —

- ensuring all healthcare workers will receive training on the principles of NCD prevention, with capacity to prevent, detect and treat them;
- using research and evaluation to drive evidence-based practice; and
- developing health literacy in the general public with appropriate information and tools.

Direction 5: Ensure a health sector that is responsive to the NCD challenges and to improve the system of care

Key actions will include —

- strengthening the role of health promotion and disease prevention in the healthcare system;
- developing, implementing and monitoring evidence-based guidelines for effective management of major NCD, as well as monitoring their usage;
- encouraging healthcare professionals to identify and address the risk factors of NCD, engage early intervention through appropriate screening and counselling, and support patients for self-management; and
- establishing a framework of targets and performance measures to take forward this strategy, oversee its implementation, track progress and evaluate performance.

Direction 6: Strengthen and develop supportive health promoting legislation

Key actions will include —

- providing legislative commitment to protect the health of the public in areas that relate to specific public health issues, such as tobacco control policy, and food labelling and safety.