



Anti-Smoking Policies Will Prevent 7 Million Deaths Worldwide by 2050: Study

With the right measures, even more lives can be saved, WHO says

MONDAY, July 1 (HealthDay News) -- Anti-tobacco policies really do stop people from smoking and save millions of lives, a new study finds.

Tobacco control measures enacted in 41 countries between 2007 and 2010 will prevent about 7.4 million premature deaths by 2050, according to the study published June 30 in the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*.

"It's a spectacular finding that by implementing these simple tobacco control policies, governments can save so many lives," study lead author David Levy, a professor of oncology at Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, D.C., said in a medical center news release. Levy's team used a modeling exercise to predict the number of lives that will be saved.

The measures the countries implemented include: protecting people from tobacco smoke, offering smokers help to quit, warning people about the dangers of tobacco, banning tobacco ads, promotion and sponsorship, and raising taxes on tobacco.

"In addition to some 7.4 million lives saved, the tobacco control policies we examined can lead to other health benefits, such as fewer adverse birth outcomes related to maternal smoking, including low birth weight, and reduced health-care costs and less loss of productivity due to less smoking-related disease," Levy added.

Dr. Douglas Bettcher, director of the department of non-communicable diseases at the World Health Organization, added that wider implementation of these anti-smoking measures would allow the prevention of millions more smoking-related deaths.

"Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death in the world, with 6 million smoking-attributable deaths per year today, and these deaths are projected to rise to 8 million a year by 2030, if current trends continue,"

Bettcher said in the news release. "By taking the right measures, this tobacco epidemic can be entirely prevented."

The 41 countries in the study included a total of nearly one billion people, or one-seventh of the world's population in 2008. The total number of smokers in those countries was nearly 290 million in 2007, the study authors noted.

More information

The American Cancer Society offers a [guide to quitting smoking](#).

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