

TobReg

Advisory Note

**Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking:
Health Effects, Research Needs and
Recommended Actions by Regulators**

**WHO Study Group on
Tobacco Product Regulation
(TobReg)**



**World Health
Organization**

Tobacco Free Initiative

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WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Advisory note : waterpipe tobacco smoking : health effects, research needs and recommended actions by regulators / WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation..

1. Smoking - adverse effects. 2. Tobacco - toxicity. 3. Tobacco - legislation. I. WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation. II. World Health Organization. III. Title: Waterpipe tobacco smoking : health effects, research needs and recommended actions by regulators.

ISBN 92 4 159385 7

(NLM classification: QV 137)

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Printed by the WHO Document Production Services, Geneva, Switzerland.

Preface

Tobacco product regulation, which includes regulating the contents and emissions of tobacco products via testing, mandating the disclosure of the test results, and regulating the packaging and labelling of tobacco products, is one of the key pillars of any comprehensive tobacco control programme. The Contracting Parties to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), a binding international treaty, are bound, *inter alia*, by the Treaty's provisions concerning tobacco product regulation contained in its Articles 9, 10 and 11.

The sound scientific information provided by a WHO scientific advisory group on tobacco product regulation, established in 2000 specifically to fill the knowledge gaps that existed at the time in the area of tobacco product regulation, served as the basis for the negotiations and the subsequent consensus reached on the language of these three articles of the Convention.

In November 2003, in recognition of the critical importance of regulating tobacco products, the WHO Director-General formalized the *ad hoc* Scientific Advisory Committee on Tobacco Product Regulation (SACTob) by changing its status to that of a study group. Following the status change, the SACTob became the "WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation" (TobReg). It is composed of national and international scientific experts on product regulation, tobacco-dependence treatment, and the laboratory analysis of tobacco ingredients and emissions. Its work is based on cutting-edge research on tobacco product issues. It conducts research and proposes testing in order to fill regulatory gaps in tobacco control. As a formalized entity of WHO, TobReg reports to the WHO Executive Board through the Director-General in order to draw the Member States' attention to the Organization's efforts in tobacco product regulation.

This advisory note on Waterpipe tobacco smoking: health effects, research needs and recommended actions by regulators has been prepared by the WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation, in accordance with the prioritized work programme of the WHO Tobacco Free Initiative and with the provisions of the WHO FCTC concerning tobacco product regulation, in response to requests made by those Member States whose populations are exposed to this form of tobacco use. The Study Group approved and adopted the present advisory at its second meeting held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 7 to 9 June 2005.

The Study Group's members serve without remuneration in their personal capacities rather than as representatives of governments or other bodies; their views do not necessarily reflect the decisions or the stated policy of WHO. The members' names are provided in the annex to this document.

Acknowledgements

The WHO Tobacco Free Initiative and the WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation wish to acknowledge the significant contributions made by Dr Alan Shihadeh (Lebanon) and Dr Thomas Eissenberg (United States of America). In early 2005, Drs Shihadeh and Eissenberg were commissioned by TFI to write a background paper on waterpipe tobacco smoking, including its prevalence, chemistry and toxicology, pharmacological effects and health hazards. As part of their effort to achieve in-depth research on the issues, Drs Shihadeh and Eissenberg collaborated with Dr Wasim Maziak of the Syrian Center for Tobacco Studies and investigators from the Egypt Smoking Prevention Research Initiative, namely Drs Ebenezer Israel (United States), Christopher Loffredo (United States) and Mostafa K. Mohamed (Egypt).

The results of the work commissioned by the WHO Tobacco Free Initiative served as the basis for discussion on the issue during the Second meeting of the WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2005. This scientific advisory note is a direct product of the deliberations that took place at that meeting.

The WHO Tobacco Free Initiative and the WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation also wish to acknowledge the contributions made by Sara Hughes in the referencing and Ellen Joy Adriano and Dawn Mautner in the formatting and design preparation of the final document.

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