TOBACCO CONTROL
AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY
Handbook
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This handbook will hopefully provide some structure on how to conduct advocacy activities together with examples that the authors have embarked on over the recent years. Future work will be included in this handbook and it is the hope of the editors that this handbook will be useful in your everyday practice.
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The information in this document is based on a one-day workshop, the MCTC Youth Network Programme for students from public and private universities in Kuala Lumpur. Together with the Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control (MCTC), the original one-hour lecture for University of Malaya undergraduate medical programme was expanded into a one-day workshop conducted on 20th August 2014, in Kuala Lumpur led by Associate Professor Dr. Farizah Mohd Hairi, Associate Professor Dr. Amer Siddiq Amer Nordin and Dr. Fredie Robinson. The authors would like to thank University of Malaya for financially supporting this programme and publication under Grand Challenge Programme (GC004A-15HTM, GC004D-15HTM & GC001D-14HTM), Flagship Project (FL002-13SBS) and Postgraduate Grant (PG104-2014A).
# Table of Contents

Contributors.......................................................................................................................... ii
Acknowledgements.................................................................................................................. iii
Foreward by the Dean of Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya..................... vi
Introduction............................................................................................................................. 1
The Story of this Handbook ................................................................................................. 2-3
Lecture 1 – Understanding the harmful effects of tobacco smoke by Dr Fredie Robinson, Universiti Malaysia Sabah ............................................................. 4-12
Lecture 2 – Roles and Rights of citizens in relation to tobacco control by Tuan Mohammad Shaa’ni Abdullah, MCTC ................................................................. 13-19
Lecture 3 – Designing a Health Campaign (Health Promotion) by Dr Awatef Amer Nordin, Institute for Health Systems Research, Ministry of Health Malaysia 20-24
Lecture 4 – Ideas on Smoke Free Health Campaign by Associate Professor Dr. Farizah Mohd Hairi, University of Malaya ............................................................. 25-35
Lecture 5 – Empowering youth in advocacy: An introduction on How to Start by Associate Professor Dr Amer Siddiq, University of Malaya ............................................. 36-44
Lecture 6 – What to do next? The bigger picture by Tuan Hj Shaari Ahmad Junid, MCTC ................................................................................................................................. 35-38
Engaging Students through Advocacy (Groupwork activities)................................. 49
Reflections .............................................................................................................................. 50-52
Learning Points ...................................................................................................................... 52
Conclusion .............................................................................................................................. 52
Evidence-based photographs throughout the workshop ............................................. 53-54
Poster Presentation: Tobacco Control Advocacy and Lobbying – an introductory lecture to medical undergraduates in University of Malaya, 46th APACPH Conference, Kuala Lumpur, October 2014 ................................................................. 55
Tobacco Control News – Guest Article by Ms Nahjan Amer Nordin regarding the 1st MCTC Youth Network Workshop ...............................................................56-59

News & Media ........................................................................................................60-70

Attachments ..............................................................................................................71-74
FOREWORD

Congratulations to the Nicotine Addiction Research Group UMCAS and the Julius Centre University of Malaya on this initiative. They have taken what was a one hour subject in our new University Malaya Medical Program into a successful workshop which allows for the dissemination of information and at the same time creating advocates in tobacco control. This handbook details the material to be discussed in the workshop and seminars.

Tobacco smoking increases both mortality and morbidity in a smoker. Smokers lose nearly 10-15 years of their life as a result of their smoking. This harm to health is not only directed to the individual smoker but also their families and friends through second-hand and third-hand smoking. More evidence is showing that the harm is not only to individuals but also to the environment at large through littering of cigarette butts which clogs and pollutes our waterways and also can result in fires i.e. bush fires.

This handbook is therefore timely to educate our future doctors graduating from University of Malaya and also other healthcare providers on the menace of tobacco, the harms to health and the workings of the tobacco industry.

I take this opportunity to thank the Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control and other members of civil society who have joined us to advocate on this very important issue and wish them all success.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Professor Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman
Dean of Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya
INTRODUCTION

Tobacco smoking kills 6 million lives each year and is estimated to increase to 10 million within the next 15 years. Apart from mortality as a result of smoking, many others are left with chronic and oftentimes debilitating health conditions as a result of their tobacco use. These include chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, cardiovascular complications, mental health conditions such as depression and more importantly, cancers. The main cancer of note is lung cancer, however, smoking increases the development of many other types of cancers from the bowel to the breast. The most likely cause of both mortality and morbidity to health from tobacco smoking is the smoke released secondary to the combustible nature of smoking. It has been estimated that there are at least 7000 toxins within the smoke of which 1% of them are known carcinogens.

Despite the harm to health, quitting smoking is challenging and oftentimes very difficult. Studies have often reported that smokers want to quit have consistently failed and on average have tried at least 4 times before becoming abstinent. Even then, this abstinence may not last as long as they desired. One of the main reasons was the nicotine within the cigarette itself which has been shown to be addictive and is the possible driver towards the consistent need for tobacco smoking. Nicotine within tobacco stimulates the release of dopamine after coupling with the nicotine acetylcholine receptors in the brain. Dopamine, a neurotransmitter implicated in reward acts in the limbic system to cause the sensation of pleasure which is desirable. Therefore as a result, the individual develops a learnt response to consume more cigarettes with tobacco to obtain the same effect. Failure of which withdrawal sets in, a negative sensation, feared and avoided. Thus a vicious cycle ensues and the addiction for cigarettes takes place.

In view of the dangers of cigarette smoking in particular, but tobacco as a whole, the World Health Organization developed the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC), a legal treaty by the WHO aimed at assisting member countries to develop policies to reduce smoking prevalence. To date, 168 countries have signed up where Malaysia was amongst the first ratifying this agreement in 2005.

Over the past decade, Malaysia has introduced various policies to ensure Malaysians are protected from the harms of cigarettes and those with the addiction can find the necessary help to assist them to quit smoking. However, as has been seen internationally, the tobacco industry has been known to thwart or reduce these efforts through various tactics. A paper by Mary Assunta included in this handbook will attest to this fact. In order to counter these tactics, members of civil society which include healthcare providers as individuals or in groups such as the Malaysian Medical Association, Malaysian Dental Association, Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society or the
Malaysian Nursing Association need to involve themselves with advocacy work in the field.

This handbook will hopefully provide some structure on how to conduct advocacy activities together with examples that the authors have embarked on over the recent years. Future work will be included in this handbook and it is the hope of the editors that this handbook will be useful in your everyday practice.

The Story of this Handbook

Tobacco control awareness and advocacy should be portrayed as influential potentials in bringing about positive change in law, regulations, resource allocations and institutional practices relevant to public health. In our new University of Malaya Medical Programme Session 2013/2014, this particular topic was introduced for the first time in 2014 as a one-hour didactic lecture. The aim of this topic was to expose and engage medical students early in their career on broader public health issues. Currently the mass media plays a key role in this advocacy and lobbying process. A localised Malaysian scenario and case studies using recent experiences working with the media to commemorate the World No Tobacco Day on 31st May 2014 was illustrated and explained.

Together with the Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control (MCTC), this original one-hour lecture expanded into a one-day workshop, called the MCTC Youth Network Programme for students from public and private universities in Kuala Lumpur. It was conducted on Wednesday, 20th August 2014, from 0830 – 1700 hours, at Meeting Room 1, Level 3A, Vivatel Hotel, Kuala Lumpur; subsequent to the successful National Symposium on Tobacco Control which was held from 14th – 15th June 2014 at IDB, Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur.

This workshop was led by Associate Professor Dr. Farizah Mohd Hairi, together with Associate Professor Dr. Amer Siddiq Amer Nordin and Dr. Fredie Robinson. Its aim was to increase the awareness among university students on the importance of smoke-free environment.

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