THE LANCET

Priority actions for the NCD crisis will prevent millions of premature NCD events every year

The NCD crisis

NCD (non-communicable diseases), including cardiovascular disease (largely heart disease and stroke), cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes, cause two of every three deaths each year. The massive global toll of NCD deepens poverty, impedes development, threatens health systems, and is a major cause of disability and health inequality.

The solution

Five priority actions

We know how to prevent millions of premature NCD deaths at low cost. *The Lancet* NCD Action Group and the NCD Alliance propose five priority actions to tackle this crisis (figure).¹

1 Leadership Continued global and national political commitment **Priority interventions** 2 Prevention 3 Treatment for NCD Action on tobacco Access to affordable and other shared essential drugs in risk factors primary health care 4 International cooperation, commitment, and funding 5 Monitoring progress and accountablity

The overall goalThe overall goal is to reduce NCD death rates by 2% per year, saving at least 36 million lives over
the next decade. The cost of the proposed package is small (table); in total it will require just
US\$ 9 billion per year.

UN HLM: a major opportunityThe UN will convene a High-Level Meeting on Non-communicable Diseases (UN HLM) onfor global healthSept 19–20, 2011, in New York, USA. This meeting will stimulate global and national action in
five areas:

1. Leadership

- Framing NCD as a critical development issue
- Investing in coordinated action across the whole of government and involving the private sector and non-government organisations

Heads of state and governments should expand national responses to NCD by:

• Committing to a small number of priority interventions (table) with timed targets and indicators for assessing outcomes







Cost per person per year (US\$)

2. Prevention

Top priorities (table) for a global movement to prevent NCD are to address the risk factors that cause NCD:

http://www.who.int/fctc

- Acceleration of implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, with the goal of a world essentially free from tobacco by 2040
- Reduction of salt intake to less than 5 g per person per day by 2025
- Improvement of diets and physical activity including early in life
- Reduction of harmful alcohol intake

3. Treatment

Treatment requires strengthening primary health-care systems and:

- Increased access to high-quality, low-cost medicines for people at high risk of heart disease or stroke, and for people who already have diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases
- Provision of affordable vaccines, as appropriate, to people at risk of infection-related cancers
- Provision of pain relief for end-of-life care

Interventions

Costs of priority interventions: country examples

country examples					
			China	India	Russia
	1. Tobacco use	Accelerated implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control	0.14	0.16	0.49
	2. Dietary salt	Mass-media campaigns and voluntary action by food industry to reduce consumption	0.05	0.06	0.16
	3. Obesity, unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity	Mass-media campaigns, food taxes, subsidies, labelling, and marketing restrictions	0.43	0.35	1.18
	4. Harmful alcohol intake	Tax increases, advertising bans, and restricted access	0.07	0.05	0.52
	5. Cardiovascular risk reduction	Combination of drugs for individuals at high risk of NCDs	1.02	0.90	1.73
	Total cost per person*		1.72	1.52	4.08
	*Excludes any cost synergi	es or future treatment cost savings.			
4. International cooperation	 Raise the priorit treatment Promote synerg as infectious dis preventing NCD Invest in the pro- 	nternational cooperation to preven y of NCD on the global agenda and lies between programmes for NCD eases and the reduction of climate and promoting sustainability oposed low-cost strategies because rns, and have co-benefits for other	l increa and o chang these	ase fundi ther glok je; there	oal health pric
5. Monitoring, reporting, and accountability		stablish goals and targets to reduce gularly to the UN on progress towa		-	

Reference

¹ Beaglehole R, Bonita R, Horton R, et al, for *The Lancet* NCD Action Group and the NCD Alliance. Priority actions for the non-communicable disease crisis. *Lancet* 2011; **377:** 1438–47.