

Integrating evidence-based tobacco control services into tuberculosis control in Armenia

GOAL

The goal of the project is to design, implement and evaluate an advocacy and training program for integrating tobacco control measures into tuberculosis (TB) care in Armenia.

Start Date:
February 2017

End Date:
February 2019

OBJECTIVES

1. Establish a nationwide healthcare professional partnership between the National TB Control Center and the National Tobacco Control Program.
2. Develop capacity for enforcing a policy of smoke-free environments for all facilities where outpatient and inpatient services are delivered to TB suspects and TB patients.
3. Build smoking cessation capacity among TB healthcare providers in Armenia through:
 - Adaptation of the existing evidence-based guidelines for tobacco dependence treatment among TB patients;
 - Development and implementation of smoking cessation training on patient counseling and treatment of tobacco dependence for healthcare providers (physicians and nurses) working with TB patients.
4. Dissemination of results of the project and integration into European and global smoking cessation networks.

TARGET POPULATION

There is a strong epidemiological evidence of the association between smoking and TB. Smoking (active and passive) is significantly associated with TB infection, recurrent TB and TB mortality. Armenia has both high burden of smoking and TB.

TB is a major public health concern in Armenia. The incidence rate of TB was 45 per 100 000, and the prevalence rate 55 per 100 000 population in Armenia in 2014. Smoking rate among Armenian men is one of the highest in the European region (63%). Smoking rates among TB patients are even higher than in the general population in Armenia.

TB treatment under the directly observed therapy is an important teachable moment for behavior change, including smoking cessation. Smoking cessation needs to be included in the standard TB case management protocol. Thus, health professionals providing TB care need to go through a training program to understand the importance of smoking cessation.

STRATEGIES

This project will be the first attempt in Armenia to integrate tobacco control in the context of TB control in Armenia and will build on the existing work and ongoing projects of the Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian School of Public Health, American University of Armenia and the strong partnership with the National TB Control Center and the National Institute of Health. The project goal will be achieved through:

1. Developing a joint policy paper to provide guidance to managers of National TB and Tobacco control programs to plan and implement joint efforts in “two-for-one” intervention.
2. Developing and implementing tobacco use recording and reporting systems.
3. Monitoring and enforcing the official smoking ban in TB health facilities through local capacity building and providing technical support.
4. Adapting of existing evidence-based clinical guidelines on smoking cessation for TB patients.
5. Developing a training package for TB physicians/nurses and its implementation.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT

This project will make sure that patients in each TB facility have access to a provider trained in effective tobacco dependence treatment. This will create opportunities within the healthcare system to support every smoker TB patient to quit smoking and every non-smoker TB patient to avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.

The project’s potential beneficiaries will include:

- Around 100 healthcare providers from five inpatient and 60 outpatient TB units in Armenia will be enabled to provide better services to the patients.
- Overall, 1,340 TB patients, including approximately 724 smoking TB patients, annually will benefit from the smoking cessation advice/assistance.





American University of Armenia



ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

The American University of Armenia (AUA) is the only United States-accredited institution in the region affiliated with the University of California. AUA enjoys an international reputation for academic excellence and high quality research and development.

The AUA Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian School of Public Health (SPH) is affiliated with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and is a member of the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER). SPH has been involved in tobacco and TB control research and advocacy projects through its Zvart Avedisian Onanian Center for Health Services Research and Development (CHSR). Since 2017, SPH has been a full member of the European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP).

The CHSR has a strong record of sustained linkages with the Ministry of Health (MOH), local and international agencies and NGOs. AUA is a member of the Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Programs. Most importantly, the CHSR helped to establish the Coalition for Tobacco Free Armenia, which currently unites 29 NGOs. The Coalition made a significant contribution to the country's accession to the WHO FCTC.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Arusyak Harutyunyan, MD, MPH

aharutyunyan@aua.am