



CHS NEWSLETTER

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NATIONAL NO TOBACCO DAY CELEBRATED FIRST TIME IN ARMENIA



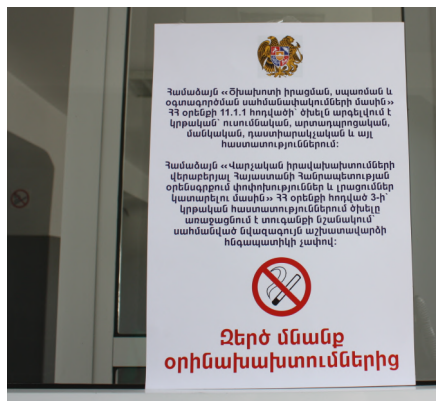
Varduhi Petrosyan, Director, CHSR, Associate Dean, CHS and Alexander Bazarchyan, Coordinator of Tobacco Control Programs of MOH at a press conference

October 12, 2009 was the National No Tobacco Day celebrated for the first time in Armenia.

This day in 2004, the National Assembly of Armenia ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

To emphasize the importance of this action, by the request from the Coalition for Tobacco Free Armenia (a union of 31 NGOs), the RA Government announced October 12 as the National No Tobacco Day.

To celebrate the National No Tobacco Day, the National Oncology Center [after Fanarjyan] and the State Pedagogical University [after Abovyan] launched their new programs to assure smoke free hospital and university. Post intervention evaluation demonstrated that compliance with worksite smoke-free policies significantly increased.



Antitobacco poster at the Yerevan State Pedagogical University

This has been done in close collaboration with the Center for Health Services Research and Development at the American University of



Diana Petrosyan and Arusyak Harutyunyan - CHSR researchers - posting antitobacco signs at the National Oncology Center

Armenia and Johns Hopkins Institute for Global Tobacco Control (JH IGTC) as part of the *Epidemiology and Intervention Research for Tobacco Control in Armenia* project aimed at reducing second hand smoke (SHS) exposure in Armenia.

This project is supported by FAMRI Center of Excellence in Translational Research at Johns Hopkins.



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GRADUATING COHORT OF 2009 (PART I)

Anna Abazyan, Breastfeeding trends in Yerevan: Relationship Between Maternal Knowledge and Breastfeeding Practices

"The positive health benefits from exclusive breastfeeding are well documented. Starting from 1993, with support from UNICEF and USAID, the Ministry of Health of Armenia initiated a new nationwide program called State Program on Breastfeeding. This study assessed the current levels of breastfeeding, feeding practices and their influence on breastfeeding and maternal knowledge about breastfeeding. The findings were compared with the survey outcomes conducted in 1997."

Seda Aghabekyan, Patient Satisfaction and Medication Noncompliance following Percutaneous Coronary Intervention in Armenia

"Coronary heart disease (CHD) is a major cause of morbidity and mortality throughout the world. One of the expected treatments for CHD is percutaneous coronary intervention, particularly drug-eluting stent placement. The project evaluated the relationship between noncompliance with antiplatelet therapy, patient satisfaction, health status and medication affordability/cost in Nork-Marash Medical Center following drug-eluting stent placement."

Gayane Avagyan, Skin Cancer Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Among Residents of Yerevan, Armenia

"Skin cancer is a worldwide public health problem that differentially affects residents of geographic regions where ultraviolet radiation (UV) has greater penetration. The study evaluated the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to skin cancer among residents of Yerevan, Armenia and assessed relationships with demographic characteristics."

Kushagra Mahansaria, Evaluation of Risk Factors Associated With Initiation and Changes in Habits Related to Smoking Among Migrant Indian Medical Students in Armenia

"Tobacco is a risk factor for six of the eight leading causes of death worldwide. Health professionals are at the forefront of the war against tobacco. Because of this role tobacco use among health professionals, especially doctors, is a barrier to smoking cessation practices in the community. The study aims to find the differences in risk factors leading to smoking among medical students in India and Indian medical students in Yerevan, Armenia."

Arusyak Harutyunyan, Investigation of Risk Factors for Preeclampsia Development Among Reproductive Age Women Living in Yerevan, Armenia



"Preeclampsia is a hypertensive disorder of pregnancy of unknown etiology. Worldwide, each year, more than four million women develop preeclampsia.

The objective of the study was to measure the association of parity and interbirth interval with preeclampsia status and their interactions with other covariates among reproductive age (18-45) women living in Yerevan."

Lilit Khachatryan, Diabetes Mellitus Type 2 and Prolonged Exposure to Estrogen as Risk Factors for Development of Breast Cancer in Women of Age 35-70 in Yerevan

"Breast cancer is among the most significant chronic disease concerns among women. Incidence has increased as much as 5% per year in developing regions of the world. The objective of the study was to investigate the associations of diabetes mellitus type 2 and prolonged exposure to estrogen with the risk of breast cancer development in women of age 35-70 residing in Yerevan."



Kim Arzoumanian PhD, Visiting Assistant Professor, AUA and Susanna Harutyunyan MD, President, "Confidence" Health NGO

Karine Baghdasarova, Proposal to Introduce a Quality Improvement Project

in Armenian Maternity Hospitals

"Among various health spheres, Maternal and Child Health (MCH) has always been a top priority and has strategic importance for the country. The Ministry of Health and international organizations have undertaken efforts to improve the quality of MCH. The proposal suggests implementing a two-year pilot project aiming to introduce quality improvement approaches in five Armenian maternities."

Karapet Davtyan, Risk Factors for Developing Surgical Wound Infection following Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Surgery, in Armenia



Kushagra Mahansaria MD MPH 2009

"Sternal and leg wound infections following coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery are risk factors for increased morbidity and mortality as well as cost of treatment. The objective of the study was to assess the

combined effect of risk factors for developing wound infection following CABG, controlling for potential confounders."

Marine Nalbandyan, Outcomes of Cataract Surgery and Predictors of Poor Outcome in Lions Regional Ophthalmic Unit

"Cataract is the first leading cause of blindness worldwide. Surgery is required to restore vision. The study assessed the outcomes of cataract surgery in Lions Regional Ophthalmic Unit (ROU) in Sevan, Gegharkunik among patients aged 50 years and over and identified reasons for borderline and poor outcomes after surgery. The recommendations of the study will help the Sevan ROU to improve cataract surgery outcomes."



Mikhayil Melikov, A Study of Adherence to Physicians' Instructions for Physical Activity among Patients with First-Time Acute Myocardial Infarction

"Myocardial Infarction (MI) survivors are especially at increased risk for recurrent MI. Because of this risk cardiac rehabilitation should be carried out during the treatment process. Since rehabilitative physical activity (PA) is promoted only through physicians' advice, the study aimed to investigate the level of non-adherence to

physicians' instructions for PA and the proportion of MI patients reportedly receiving instructions for PA from their physicians."

MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES AND FORTIFIED FOODS IN ARMENIA

Deficiencies of important micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) in food can cause a range of health and developmental problems. Fortifying (supplementing with micronutrients) foods could prevent many health problems related to micronutrient deficiencies. Therefore, in 2009 the Government of Armenia established a steering committee to coordinate all activities regarding a national flour fortification initiative.

The CHSR research team conducted qualitative focus group discussions with 58 participants from Yerevan, Gegharkunik and Lori marzes and analyzed the current knowledge, perceptions and attitudes among the general population, health providers and millers about micronutrient deficiencies and provided recommendations for the best communication channels and messages for social marketing campaigns for flour fortification. The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) in Armenia supported this research.

The study found a lack of knowledge concerning food fortification among the general population (especially in the marzes) and healthcare providers. The great majority of participants thought that food fortification generally had no value or was even potentially harmful; however, all study participants believed that iodizing salt protected the health of the population and indicated that they regularly buy iodized salt from the market.

The majority of participants from both the general population and the primary health care providers expressed distrust concerning flour fortification, with concerns that it might increase the likelihood of becoming obese, increase the prices, have other adverse health affects and change the taste of products using the fortified flour.

Almost all of the participants indicated that the population would be most effectively informed about the upcoming fortification of flour through TV and using healthcare specialists as spokespersons. All participants felt that the targeted social marketing messages should be the same for physicians, millers and the general population. The message "Let's maintain our health with our daily bread" (Pahpanenk mer aroghdjutyuny mer hanapazorya hatsov) was developed by participants and proposed as the best message among many for the social marketing campaign for flour fortification.

All participants suggested having both fortified and non-fortified flour products in the market to provide a choice.

The CHSR team presented the findings of this study to representatives of the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, and Finance, USAID, UNICEF and other UN agencies.

LATEST NEWS

CHSR Researcher Awarded Fulbright at Harvard



Dr. Narine Movsisyan, Program Manager at the Center for Health Services Research and Development, was awarded a prestigious Fulbright Fellowship to conduct smoking cessation research at the Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, USA. She has been appointed as Research Fellow at the Division of Public Health Practice (DPHP) and is working under mentorship of Professor Gregory Connolly, the Interim Dean of DPHP and a recognized global tobacco control expert.

“Being a member of the Fulbright community is a great privilege, but also a great responsibility,” Dr. Movsisyan noted. “The Harvard School of Public Health attracts a highly competitive pool of international students and scholars and offers a unique atmosphere for learning, sharing and advancing knowledge.”

Dr. Movsisyan will return to the Center for Health Services Research and Development at AUA in late May 2010.



November 3, 2009 Tbilisi, Georgia: Dr. Varduhi Petrosyan, Associate Dean of the College of Health Sciences shared the experience of the Master of Public Health Program and the Center for Health Services Research and Development at AUA with colleagues from the Caucasus medical universities during the Health Promotion Seminar for Caucasus Universities. Tbilisi State Medical University and Georgian Health Promotion and Education Foundation organized the seminar in collaboration with the University of Bergen, Norway.



October 30, 2009 Yerevan, Armenia: Dr. Karine Saribekyan, Head of the Maternal and Child Health Department, Ministry of Health, Republic of Armenia, at the Public Health Seminar series presenting successes and challenges of Implementation of the State-paid Obstetrics Certificate Program in Armenia. Students, graduates, research staff and faculty from the College of Health Sciences attended the seminar.

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