

Editorial

Tobacco-free India—A Mission

Tobacco is the foremost cause of preventable deaths in world today. It causes wide range of systemic diseases including oral precancer, cancer and other cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. It is a risk factor to health and thus new word for tobacco 'Terrorisk' is coined. India, which is 2nd largest producer and consumer for tobacco, has far more complex tobacco problems than any other country. Currently, tobacco attributable deaths in India are about 8 to 9 lakhs per year, due to which financial burden of about 308.33 billion rupees was imposed on Government of India in 2002-03.

'All Indians should enjoy health' was the vision of Mahatma Gandhi. Walking on this visionary pathway, Government of Maharashtra banned production and sale of gutkha and pan masala within the state from 1st June 2012. Government Dental College and Hospital, Nagpur, from its systematic and sustainable public health campaigns supported the ban. As per the directives from Dental Council of India for internship training, interns of Government Dental College and Hospital in collaboration with SEARCH—a local NGO carried out field surveys in rural and tribal area of Gadchiroli district and came out with shocking results of high prevalence of oral submucous fibrosis and leukoplakias. An action plan to make whole Gadchiroli district, 'Tobacco-free' is prepared with the assistance of district administration under National Rural Health Mission. This will be executed by systemic surveying of whole population of Gadchiroli with clinical intervention treatment and counseling to tobacco-addicted patients. I strongly advocate adoption of this project by every dental institute in the state by involving their young enthusiastic interns and local dental professionals to achieve ultimately the mission of 'Tobacco-free India'. On short term, it will help in reduction of prevalence of oral precancer and cancer and will motivate children and youth for practicing healthy lifestyle. In long term, it will surely help in decreasing poverty and betterment of socioeconomic status due to stoppage of spending on tobacco the Terrorisk.

Vinay K Hazare

Dean, Government Dental College and Hospital
Nagpur, Maharashtra, India