



New tools launched to tackle cardiovascular disease, the biggest killer in Thailand

29 September 2017: On the occasion of World Heart Day, the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other partners launched a technical package to tackle cardiovascular disease—the number one killer in Thailand and around the world.

Cardiovascular diseases, including heart attack and stroke, claim the lives of 17.7 million people every year accounting for one out of every three deaths globally. Nearly half of all deaths from cardiovascular disease occur unnecessarily early, among individuals before the age of 70 years, who are productive citizens and often family bread winners. Heart attack and stroke were the top two causes of death in Thailand in 2014 killing nearly 150,000 people and costing 80 billion bahts in medical expenses and lost productivity annually.

The good news is that most deaths from cardiovascular disease can be prevented or delayed by addressing risk factors such as high blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, tobacco use, unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol.

The Global Hearts Initiative comprises three technical packages:

- **HEARTS:** a technical package that provides countries the tools to incorporate cardiovascular disease management best practices at the primary health care level to reduce risk factors such as high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.
- **SHAKE:** a set of evidence-backed policy options and examples to support governments to lower population salt consumption.
- **MPOWER:** a set of six practical, affordable and achievable measures to help countries implement specific provisions of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

“Premature deaths from cardiovascular diseases can be prevented. We know what works,” said Daniel Kertesz, WHO representative to Thailand. “The Global Hearts Initiative could save millions of lives by helping countries to scale-up proven measures to prevent cardiovascular disease and risk factors, including tobacco taxation, reducing salt consumption, and treating people with high blood pressure and other clinical risk factors”, Dr Kertesz added.

By scaling up interventions which have proven to work, developed countries like the United States have reduced deaths from cardiovascular disease by more than 40%, and Finland by 80% among men. The HEARTS technical package aims to extend proven measures that have worked in developed countries to resource-limited settings where the burden of cardiovascular disease is the highest.



“Cardiovascular disease accounts for 30% of all deaths in Thailand. I am pleased to have CDC partner with the WHO in launching this set of tools to improve the lives of the people of Thailand,” remarked John MacArthur, Director of the Thailand MOPH – US CDC Collaboration.

As part of the national strategy for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, Thailand has set targets to reduce the prevalence of raised blood pressure by 25%, reduce population sodium (salt) intake by 30%, reduce tobacco use by 30% and halt the rise in obesity and diabetes by 2025.

Thailand was selected as one of the 14 countries worldwide to pilot test the HEARTS initiative. Thailand will intensify prevention and control of cardiovascular disease through by launching public awareness campaigns for sodium (salt reduction), working with food industry to reduce salt content of packaged food, accelerating the implementation of tobacco control interventions, improving the quality of hypertension treatment and strengthening surveillance and monitoring systems.

For more information go to:

http://www.who.int/cardiovascular_diseases/world-heart-day-2017/en/

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