

Transforming noncommunicable disease prevention and control

Fact sheet: October 2022

Key facts

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular diseases and chronic respiratory diseases, are the **leading cause of death and disability** in the Western Pacific Region, causing an estimated **12 million deaths in 2019**.

Despite progress in reducing premature deaths due to NCDs from 2000 to 2010, **new risk factors and changing environments have reversed progress** in some countries over the past decade.

Treatment costs, loss of employment and premature death due to NCDs are expected to result in **cumulative economic losses of US\$ 47 trillion by 2030**.



Major achievements in health have led to **increases in life expectancy** worldwide and in the Western Pacific. However, due to population growth, urbanization, ageing and globalization of unhealthy lifestyles, the number of **people living with NCDs is rising**. **NCD prevention and health promotion, screening and diagnosis, disease management, rehabilitation, and health systems strengthening** are needed to control the NCD epidemic; these actions will require a whole-of-society approach throughout the life-course.

The health sector alone cannot address all of the factors that determine a person's risk of developing a NCD. However, **creating health-promoting environments**, where communities support healthy diets and lifestyle choices, **can help turn a sick system into a health system**. **Cross-sectoral partnerships and networking** are necessary to create healthy environments and address the **social and commercial determinants of health**, from socioeconomic status to exposure to food marketing, that influence NCD risk.

NCDs pose a **great risk to sustainable development goals** in the Region. In addition to causing death and disability, **health-care costs** can overwhelm household budgets and accelerate poverty. **People and families with low incomes are at a greater risk of developing NCDs** and are further burdened by limited access to health services. Conversely, countries can achieve both healthy populations and viable societies by investing in NCD prevention and control as well as health-enabling behaviours and environments. Each dollar invested in NCD Best Buys—a package of 16 interventions that focus on key NCD risk factors and diseases—can yield a return of US\$ 7.

WHO response

WHO has worked alongside Member States, stakeholders, partners and experts to develop the *Regional Action Framework for Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Control in the Western Pacific*, aimed at turning a “sick system” into a “health system” to end the NCD epidemic. It calls on Member States, partners and stakeholders to:

- **Strengthen mechanisms for collection and use of data and information** for planning, monitoring progress and evaluating NCD policies and programmes.
- **Develop policies that go beyond the health sector** to enable health-promoting environments and address social determinants of health at national and subnational levels.
- **Screen populations for major NCDs**: cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases.
- **Strengthen primary health care** to provide person-centred NCD management.
- **Empower patients for self-management and adherence** through health promotion, prevention and individualized data.

The framework provides an integrated, cross-sectoral and pragmatic approach that builds on existing capacities, strengths and initiatives.

WHO supports countries in adopting new solutions to the NCD epidemic through a regional “grounds-up” arrangement, in which the Regional Office or country offices identify common problems and help Member States develop customized solutions based on their local contexts.

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