Advocacy for Taxation

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South Africa
Objectives

• To share learnings on:

• converting evidence into policies which promote healthy behaviour, and

• the hurdles that prevent the translation of knowledge into practice.
Tobacco Smoking as a Possible Etiologic Factor in Bronchiogenic Carcinoma
A Study of Six Hundred and Eighty-Four Proved Cases
Ernest L. Wynder
and
Evarts A. Graham, M.D.

a few of the workers who thought that there was some evidence that tobacco was an important factor in the increase of cancer of the lungs. Müller in 1939, from a careful but limited clinical statistical study, offered good evidence that heavy smoking is an important etiologic factor. In 1941 Ochsner and DeBakey called attention to the similarity of the curve of increased sales of cigarettes in this country to the greater prevalence of carcinoma of the lungs. This association is

Smoking and Carcinoma of the Lung
Preliminary Report

by
Richard Doll, M.D., M.R.C.P.
Member of the Statistical Research Unit of the Medical Research Council

and

A. Bradford Hill, Ph.D., D.Sc.
Professor of Medical Statistics, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; Honorary Director of the Statistical Research Unit of the Medical Research Council
Health Education
A Linear Model

Education & information

Target

Behaviour Change
WORLD TOBACCO USE
Developed vs. Developing

Mil. Lbs.


Developed  Developed
Unhappy Fact

• Globally, the industry has been better at recruiting new customers, than we have been at discouraging tobacco use.
Health check

• Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the world.
• 7m deaths globally
• Causes or worsens 46 diseases.
• Low-middle income countries are disproportionally affected
Tobacco does not just kill...
Smoking can affect sexual performance
South Africa cigarette consumption
1960 - 2009

Years

Packs/adult/year
Happy Fact

We have the tools to quickly and substantially reduce consumption.
WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)

• The world’s **first public health treaty**

• **A coordinated, global effort to reduce tobacco use**

Key realization
why education is not sufficient?

• Behavioural choices are not made in a societal void.

• Many external factors including friends, family and other circumstances influence the choices we make.
Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion

• “Political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, behavioural and biological factors can all favour health or be harmful to ‘good health’.

• Health promotion aims to make these conditions favourable through advocacy for health.”

1986
Health Promotion

- Education & information
- Social norms
- Economics
- Target
- Behaviour Change
What is health promotion?

Health Promotion - “the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health”.

Giving people skills and creating supportive environments to impact positively on health.
• Health promotion seeks to make: “the healthy choice the easy choice & the unhealthy choice the more difficult choice.”

It does not want to take choice away from people only to tip the scale in favour of healthy choices.
I never thought things could get this bad!

Designated smoking area

I swear I'm about ready to give up!
Nobel Prize in Economics 2017

• “Nudges”, small design changes that can markedly affect individual behavior…

Richard N Thaler

Making beneficial choices easier and non-beneficial choices difficult.
Determinants of Drug use

The level of drug use in society depends upon:

• Affordability
• Availability
• Social acceptability
Effectiveness of TC measures

- Ad Bans: 11%
- Health ed: 15%
- GP advice: 11%
- Clean air: 11%
- Taxes: 52%
Political Will

• “Lack of political will” is often given as a reason for lack of progress.

• The government, or a Minister, is considered to be:
  – insufficiently motivated, or
  – does not give priority, or
  – lacks the capacity to implement TC policies and programmes.
Key Realization - Determinants of public health policies

• Whether politicians are willing and able to engage is affected by the socio-political and bureaucratic environment in which they operate.

• Public policies are not only driven by evidence.

• Policy making is an *ad hoc* process... it is a contested field influenced by both pro-health and commercial forces.
Influencing policy

- Education & information
- Target
- Social norms
- Economics
- Behaviour Change
An enabling environment for political will

• The emergence of political will is a function of the extent to which advocates can create space for change – i.e., a positive enabling environment.

• An issue becomes a political “must” as a result of:

  – scientific evidence,
  – public pressure and citizen engagement;
  – a politician’s personal sense of civic duty; or
  – the global environment, including international conventions (FCTC), & national legislative initiatives.
Early Adopters

Ireland 2004

Australia, 2012

Would you ask the owner of a building to designate a smoking area?
Makes about as much sense as designating a urinating area in a swimming pool!
Advocacy, advocacy, advocacy

- What is required is a strategy that helps people:
  - understand the real issues,
  - confront the conflicting values or interests, and
  - define a programme for effective action.

Mobilise people to act and create a sense of urgency.
What is advocacy?

- Activities that exert pressure for change in a specific policy or behaviour of a government, institution, organisation or possibly a single individual (a business leader or city mayor).

It:
- Questions existing policy and systems.
- Proposes alternative policy solutions.
- Analyses the costs of action and inaction.
- Opens up space for public discussion.

- Advocacy include many activities including lobbying, media campaigns, public speaking, commissioning and publicising research or polls, and taking legal action.
Lobbying

• **Lobbying** face-to-face engagement with decision-makers to influence policies.

• It impacts on decision-makers by:
  - Influencing their choices when formulating decisions
  - Changing their perception or understanding of the issue
  - Changing their decision-making behaviour
Strategic planning

- What is the **goal**?
- Who has the **power** to make it happen?
- What **messages** will persuade them to act?
- How do we get them to hear it? Who will be the most effective **messengers**?
- What resources do we have?
- What do we need to develop?
- How do we begin?
Step 1. Identify the problem, its causes & solutions

PROBLEM:
• Tobacco excise taxes are not optimal to achieve health and revenue objectives.

ASK, WHY?
• Governments see tobacco industry as a valuable economic partner and overlook critics.
  • ASK WHY, AGAIN?

SOLUTION
• Debunk myths about the economic contribution of tobacco.
• Explain benefits.
Step 2; Assess the external context

• What do you need to influence to bring about the change you seek?
• Who has the most power to bring about the change you want to see?

Types of stakeholders usually break down into the following categories:
• **Targets**: they are decision-makers or people with influence over decision-makers.
• **Constituents**: those who are directly affected by the situation and can be expected to benefit from your advocacy.
• **Allies**: those who share your aims and can help. Allies could be CSOs, churches, media, NGOs, academics, businesses, etc.
• **Opponents**: those who are opposed to what you want to achieve and will try to block the changes you want to see.
Step 3; Set your goals, objectives & indicators

**GOAL:**

- Reduce tobacco consumption by making tobacco products less affordable.
What is the objective?

- **Specific Goal:** Minister of Finance to increase tobacco excise taxes at a rate greater than the annual rate of inflation and increases in income.
- Smokeless tobacco products to be taxed at similar rates to other tobacco products.

- **Activity:** Economic analysis of the optimal tax rate from a health perspective and its revenue implications.

- **Activity:** Design tax information package to be given out to all key actors.

- **Activity:** Assess industry’s impact on economy.
Step 4: Developing your key messages

- A short and persuasive statement about your campaign that captures:
  - what you want to achieve and the change you want to see
  - why you want to achieve it, including the positive or negative consequences of no action,
  - how you propose to achieve it what action you want the audience to take.
- The message should be memorable and stick in the mind long after being delivered.
Step 4

Remember: PAY BACK THE MONEY, FEES MUST FALL

Examples:
• Tobacco taxes must rise.
• Low tobacco taxes cost lives.
• Let’s tax our way to health.
• Cheap cigarettes = more children smoking.
• Reducing tobacco use reduces poverty.
• Tobacco taxes can pay money for more teachers and nurses.
• Low taxes = higher profits.

• Also require policy briefs, media releases, leaflets, etc
Media advocacy

- The presentation of issues as news shapes both public understanding of public health issues and future related policy.
- For over 60 years the media have kept the story of smoking & health alive.
- Through repetition they have changed public attitudes.
- Also caused confusion.
Framing

• The media tell people not only what issues to think about, but how to think about them.

• The way the media frame an issue helps determine how it is viewed

• A frame is a way of “packaging and positioning an issue so that it conveys a selected meaning.”
• Framing seeks to define ‘what this issue is really about.”’

• It tells policy makers and the public:
  – what is the real problem;
  – why does it matter; and
  – what is the appropriate solution.
Lung society endorses smoke-criminalising Bill

By Brian Stuart
CAPE TOWN - The government of developing countries had "the moral responsibility" to protect their citizens against disease, the SA Pneumology Society said yesterday in endorsing the Bill to criminalising smoking.

Prof. Usman Qalibbo, president of the society and head of the department of medicine at Natal University, issued a statement supporting the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Bill.

As an association committed to improving the respiratory health of the population, the society acknowledged the serious adverse health effects of voluntary and involuntary (passive) tobacco smoke exposure.

Taking note of the fact that tobacco companies had imposed third world countries for marketing tobacco products because of the concern in first world countries over the serious effects of tobacco smoke and reduced sales in those countries.

"It is immoral to allow citizens of developing countries to be exposed to one of the most preventable diseases-promoting agents, tobacco smoke. It is the moral responsibility of governments to protect their citizens from such harm."

The National Assembly's portfolio committee is to hold public hearings on the Bill at Parliament next Monday and Tuesday - Sapa
Step 5: What approach is most likely to work:

- As an ‘insider’ or ‘adversary’
Strategies & Tactics

Goal: To Win

- Low Profile
  - Quiet Negotiation
  - Meet Civil Servants
  - Share Information
  - Non-Public Briefs

- Medium Profile
  - Continued Negotiation
  - Meet Civil Servants
  - Public Briefs
  - “Feed” Opposition
  - Appear at Committees
  - MP Visitations
  - Alliances with Other Groups
  - Letters to MP’s/Newspapers

- High Profile
  - Public Criticism
  - P.R. and Ad Campaigns
  - Work Opposition
  - Release Information
  - Evidence briefs
  - Demonstrating & Rallies
Step 6: Monitoring and evaluation

- Regularly assess whether you are seeing any changes in the ‘big picture’.
- Reassess your targets and approaches.
- Identify challenges that need to be tackled
Conclusion

• **TOP TIPS for successful lobbying**

• Be clear on what you want and what you are asking people to do.
• Learn the views of the people to be lobbied.
• Make clear the benefits of the proposed action.
• Be timely – the earlier you start trying to influence a process or policy, the greater the chance of success.
A good advocate:

• Has low ego needs
• Builds trust. Provides credible and reliable information and is well informed.
• Does not exaggerate the facts or make unsubstantiated claims.
Thank You
TV Interview

• You have been invited to give an interview on the economic impact of tobacco policies.
• The topics for discussion are:
  – Excise taxes
  – Secondhand smoke.
**Prepare**

*Give an interview to make your points. Do not give an interview to answer questions.* Know what your key points are and what headline you would like to see printed or aired

*Know your reporter.* Try to find out if the reporter is fair or biased on tobacco issues.

*Less is more.* The more you say, the more likely it is that you will be misquoted, or that your key points will not be reported.

*I don’t know.* On non-core issues it is sometimes better to say “I do not know, I can find out” then to speculate.

*Be relaxed and confident.* Keep a sense of humour and smile. Anxiety will show itself in your body language and voice. Take a breath before you start speaking.
Arguments Against Tax Increases

• Government will harm an important tax payer.

• Smuggling will increase.

• Regressive - it will hurt the poor.
MISLEADING ARGUMENT:
“The industry pays millions in taxes to the government. Do not kill the Golden Goose.”

THIS IS INCORRECT

Explanation: Smokers pay the taxes – the tobacco industry only collects the taxes from smokers and passes it on to the government.

The tobacco industry lays rotten eggs not golden eggs.
MISLEADING ARGUMENT:
“The poor will be hit harder by the increased tobacco taxes”

THIS IS INCORRECT

EXPLANATION:

- Studies show that poor are first to stop smoking if tobacco prices increase.
- Poor save money by stopping smoking.
- Use increased government revenues to support pro-poor programmes.
MISLEADING ARGUMENT:
“Increased tobacco taxes will lead to growth of illicit trade in tobacco products”

THIS IS INCORRECT

What drives smuggling?
High taxes or the tobacco industry?

• High prices provide an incentive for smuggling but other factors are more important.

• Smuggling, is driven by the commercial activities of the tobacco companies
Smuggling reduces effectiveness but does not defeat government goals

Smuggling drives down prices – so consumption does not decline as fast.

– Despite smuggling, increased taxes nearly always increase revenues and reduce tobacco use.

– Respond by cracking down on smuggling rather than foregoing tax increases
Tobacco Taxes and Revenues
South Africa 1980-2009

Source: Van Walbeek (2005), updated with data from National Treasury
Impact on the Poor:
Poor families spend less on tobacco after taxes are raised.

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