

International Association on Smoking Control & Harm Reduction

DECLARATION

- Despite knowing the harmful health effects of smoking for decades, still more than 1 billion people globally smoke and more than 7 million die prematurely every year from smoking related diseases.
- Nicotine has an addictive potential but plays a minor role in smoking related mortality. In an epistemological climate where perceptions on the effects of nicotine is inconsistent with medical consensus, our purpose is to provide stakeholders with science-based and balanced information on the effects of nicotine.
- Nicotine is an addictive substance. However, it is been used successfully in smoking control and smoking cessation, and it could be used in smoking harm reduction.
- Smoking cessation and prevention remain the most impactful and cost-effective interventions in medicine. Healthcare and public health professionals need to continuously raise awareness to every smoker and to the population as a whole about the adverse effects of smoking.
- In an era of accelerating progress and technological innovation, new approaches emerge based on potentially safer alternatives than cigarettes, for those smokers, who for various reasons cannot give up smoking completely, i.e. Tobacco Harm Reduction.
- The 3rd Scientific Summit (Tobacco Harm Reduction: Novel products, Research & Policy || 24 & 25 September 2020) undoubtedly proved that there is a growing interest among experts in novel approaches towards tobacco control and that there is an ongoing discussion that limiting the negative effects of smoking can be also achieved by tobacco harm reduction.
- We believe that smoking control strategies should be reshaped to include harm reduction through alternative potentially lower risk products use, besides the traditional smoking cessation and smoking prevention measures.
- Harm reduction can help those who for various reasons are not able to quit smoking. This group of smokers should not be abandoned by tobacco control policies. Where cessation repeatedly fails, switching to less harmful products will have a positive effect for many smokers.
- In the last year, more regulatory authorities now consider allowing the sales of alternative potentially lower risk tobacco products with accurate information.

- Yet, we need to acknowledge that tobacco harm reduction debate is still at an early stage and more research and publications are needed to raise awareness on existing knowledge, generate more data and create more opportunities for education of health policy experts, regulators and general public and thus properly explain the benefits of this approach, while also appropriately addressing the concerns such as continuous use of, and dependence on, nicotine as well as potential adoption of use by never smokers and youth.
- We also need to acknowledge that the debate on tobacco harm reduction is still facing a lot of opposition from some of the key actors, including policy and regulatory bodies. We need to find a way of establishing a constructive dialogue to discuss concerns and challenges.
- In order to effectively achieve the above, there is a need to step up the efforts and benefit from the already existing solid expertise in many countries. This is the reason why we are now establishing an International Association of international experts on Smoking Control & Harm Reduction including scientists (all sectors), medical doctors, policy experts, behavioural experts, academics or professionals, etc., which would allow for open and constructive dialogue and help to come up with a new broader approach to smoking control policies. The focus should be on the following key pillars:
 - Scientific evidence, including sharing and publicizing the latest scientific data, identifying research gaps, independent verification of the industry data.
 - Behavioural aspects
 - ⊙ focus on smokers
 - ⊙ what are the needs of those who want to quit smoking, as well as how to effectively help those who are not willing to quit.
 - Policy recommendations.
 - Establishing a dialogue with policy experts and regulators at international, EU and national level.
- The values and goals of this association are summarized in its mission statement and founding declaration, formulated by its founding members.