

## ABSTRACT FOR WCTOH 2003, HELSINKI

### NICOTINE ADDICTION AND PUBLIC POLICY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: RESULTS OF A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Tobacco mortality over the next few decades will fall only if cessation rises among the world's 0.8 billion smokers in developing countries. However, cessation rates are low in these countries. Nicotine addiction plays a dominant role in starting and maintaining smoking and in relapse. The economic and public policy aspects of addiction have received relatively little attention, especially for developing countries. Recent economic analysis suggests, for example, that the extent of nicotine addiction can be measured by the dependence of current smoking on past smoking and the responsiveness to price in the short and longer term. This suggests that developing countries need to adopt even more aggressive taxation policy.

A systematic review of nicotine addiction has been undertaken under the Disease Control Priorities Project of the National Institutes of Health, World Bank and WHO in collaboration with the Universities of Lausanne and Toronto and the International Tobacco Evidence Network (ITEN). A team of over 30 experts has examined the economic, biological and psychological bases for addiction, the state of the art in cessation therapies, and the implications for control programs. Detailed, peer reviewed background papers have been commissioned and discussed at a technical meeting in Mumbai, India.

This study will present new evidence on:

1. The rationale for government intervention (including a fresh look at arguments for consumer sovereignty of adult smokers, and the economic costs for initiation and cessation).
2. Recommendations on optimal price and non-price measures that take into account addiction.
3. Updated estimates of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of control interventions globally.
4. A draft "nicotine addiction index" for countries, drawing on the Tobacco Control Country Profiles.
5. Recommendations for interdisciplinary research to reduce the harmful consequences of addiction worldwide.