Press Release

Thank you for not smoking: Run a positive campaign

The prevalence of tobacco use is growing in India; more than one-third of adults use tobacco in some form or the other.

New Delhi, Feb 26, 2017: As shown by the Global Adult Tobacco Survey India (GATS India) 2009-2010, more than one-third (35%) of adults in India use tobacco in some form or the other. Of these, 21% adults use only smokeless tobacco, 9% only smoke and 5% smoke as well as use smokeless tobacco. The survey also showed that 52% of adults were exposed to second-hand smoke (SHS) at home.

Tobacco use is associated with many adverse health effects and is a major preventable cause of morbidity and mortality. As per the CDC, smoking increases the risk of coronary heart disease by 2 to 4 times, for stroke by 2 to 4 times, lung cancer by about 25 times. In addition, it reduces quality of life, and increases health care utilization and cost. India has a ‘National Tobacco Control Programme’ in place to make the public aware about the harmful effects of tobacco use, control tobacco consumption and minimize the deaths.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement said that, “Smoking kills” has been the message that has been conveyed in the campaigns on tobacco control with the expectation that highlighting the potentially life-threatening health consequences would deter people from smoking or using tobacco products. It’s time to alter the tone of such public health campaigns, from negative to positive.”

“Quite often, we may rebuke a patient for failing in his efforts to quit smoking and say, “If you do not quit, you may die”. A statement worded as this may inadvertently sound discouraging to the patient. While it is important that people know the dangers of smoking or using tobacco products, a positive communication approach may have a more fruitful impact than a critical approach. Avoid violent communication. Do not condemn, criticize and complaint, the 3 Cs of violent communication. Instead use a nonviolent communication approach to help and support your patient in his efforts to give up smoking. Tell your patient, who is trying to quit smoking or other tobacco products -Thank you for not smoking”, added Dr K K Aggarwal.

It is important that doctors appreciate the hard work put in by the patients and their perseverance. This way the patient knows that he has your support and will have trust and faith in you. The
chances that the patient would adhere to the lifestyle modifications are higher if communicated in an empathetic and supportive manner.

IMA is committed to working closely with all National Health Programs alongside the government. As individual doctors, we too can contribute to the success of National Tobacco Control Program. Counsel your patients who smoke about quitting smoking but, with a different approach, this way, we can turn a negative situation to a more positive action.

**Following are some smoking cessation tips:**

1. Make a plan to quit smoking. Make a promise, set a date and stick to it.
2. A craving can last five minutes. Before you give up, make a list of five-minute strategies to avoid the urge.
3. Exercise – even a five-minute walk, jog or stretch – efficiently cuts cravings.
4. When you’re at a social gathering, stay around non-smokers.
5. Keep reminding yourself why you made the decision to give up. Make a list of the reasons and read it when you need support.

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**About IMA:** Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2,60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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