

TACKLING THE LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH IN THE AMERICAS: LAUNCH OF THE INTER-AMERICAN TASK FORCE ON NCDs

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Dr. Kumar Sundaraneedi, Medical Director Health Programmes. Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago has participated in the United Nations High Level Meeting (UNHLM) which was held in New York City and where we have identified the major health problems in our country and working towards reducing the morbidity and mortality.

Present - Situational Analysis

The top five causes of mortality in Trinidad and Tobago are cardiovascular disease (CVD), Cancer Diabetes, Accidents and Injuries and cerebrovascular disease. Heart disease is the #1 cause of death, accounting for a quarter (25%) of all deaths. Taken together, heart disease, cancer, diabetes and cerebrovascular disease, account for over 60% of all deaths.

Prevalence of Chronic Disease Risk Factors

- The prevalence of chronic disease risk factors in the population of Trinidad and Tobago is also high.
- Results from the STEPS NCD Risk Factor Survey (MOH/PAHO, 2011) also revealed that the prevalence of Diabetes is 21% and Hypertension is 26.3%.
- Physical inactivity- In Trinidad and Tobago activity 55% females and 47% males are sedentary.
- Unhealthy Diet & Obesity – 55.7% population over-weight/obese: 30.0% overweight and/or 25.7% obese, more women being overweight/obese than men.
- Fruit and vegetable consumption is low. The mean number of daily servings for fruit was 1.0. The mean number of servings for vegetable 1.3.

Trinidad and Tobago Strategies for addressing the chronic disease epidemic

- Establishment of a mechanism for multi-sectoral action on NCDs.
- “Emphasis...placed on reduction of the risk factors”
- “A shift towards protecting the future of our children”
- “Establishment of global targets for NCD prevention and control with a possible target of reducing NCDs by 25% by 2005”

Progress Made at Country Level since UNHLM 2011

- Operational National NCD Policy, Strategy or Action Plan Integrating NCDs and their Risk Factors.
- Baseline Data on NCD Risk Factors at national Level Established
- Mechanisms for Multi-sectoral collaboration
- Development of Policy, Strategy or Action Plan which integrates NCDs and their Risk factors
- Governance and Legislation
- National research agenda for NCDs

Mechanisms for Multi-Sectoral Collaboration

- Partners Forum Working Committee for action on NCDs (PAFNCD) was established in 2011 by Cabinet, as a mechanism to facilitate multi-sectoral action on NCD prevention and control.
- The core function of PAFNCD is to catalyze action by public and private sector, NGOs and Civil Society groups for the prevention and control of NCDs and keeping with the UN Declaration on NCDs.
- PAFNCD developed a plan of work that included:

- Healthy Food Supply initiative focused on: Trans Fat Free T&T; Salt and Sugar Reduction
- Wellness Workplace Wellness Initiative
- Creating Supportive environments for physical activity in communities
- Through joint collaboration and dialogue the Partners Forum Supported the Ministry of Health in
- Developing a research proposals for the :
 - Determination of trans Fat content in locally available foods and in the population of Trinidad and Tobago
 - Determination of Dietary Salt Intake
- Hosting a Healthy Foods Sensitization meeting for the local food and beverage manufacturers and issuing a 'Call to Action' to them. Collaborate with the Partners forum and MOH in Voluntary action to reduce salt and sugar in locally produced foods
- Developing the Draft Interim Nutrition Standard for Foods Sold or Served in Schools

Governance and Legislation

- In 2013, the Tobacco Packaging and Labelling Regulation was passed. This regulation mandated and specified the use of graphic warning pictures on cigarette packages.
- In 2011, Cabinet approved the setting of a Tobacco Control Unit in the Ministry of Health which will be a focal agency to ensure compliance with all aspects of the legislation and with issues relating to inspection and licensing. It will also be responsible for tracking the impact of the legislation on the incidence of chronic diseases in the country.

Action to Promote Health Education, Health Literacy Strategies and Programmes in and out of Schools and through Public Awareness Campaigns.

- The Fight the Fat Campaign and Check Yourself ...Know your Numbers campaign
 - The Fight the Fat Campaign was developed in keeping with UNHLM Resolution 43 (b), utilizing the evidence generated from the Evaluation of School Meals Options, Survey of BMIs (2010), the STEPS Risk Factor Survey (2011), the Global School Health Survey and the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, 2011.
 - The campaign is a public health awareness campaign which utilize health education and health promotion strategies and seeks to reduce the risk factors for NCDs in the population, with emphasis on:
 - Reducing over-weight and obesity in children and adults,
 - Increase physical activity in all population groups
 - Promote healthy eating in the population

Progress Made: 2013-2015

- Over 30 health fairs/outreaches held in community settings, health facilities, malls, work places
- Health education material promoting physical activity, healthy eating developed
- 25 Lay Persons from NGOs, CBOs and FBOs trained as NCD Peer Educators in 2014 to support implementation of the program in communities
- Training of certified diabetes educators undertaken
- Healthy Lifestyle Clinic for Management of Children with NCDs
- Health in all Policies Approach