

Strategy for the prevention and control of Non Communicable
Diseases in the Democratic People' s Republic of Korea 2014-
2020

Ministry of Public Health

May, 2014

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Introduction

The Great Leader Comrade Kim Jong Il instructed as follows.

“An important task in combating disease is to take proper steps to prevent the diseases that affect the cardiovascular system, cancerous diseases, disease of the metabolism and others which have a high rate of incidence and are very destructive to a man’ s ability to work.”

(Letter to the National Conference of Health Workers April 21, 1985)

The Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in the DPR of Korea 2014-2020 was adopted in the Multisectoral Consultation for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases that took place in Pyongyang in , 2014.

This strategy is a country strategy to effectively prevent and control noncommunicable diseases according to the high demand of the government to bring the health of the people in line of global level, basing on the Global Strategy for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020, Strategy of South-East Asia Region 2013-2020 and Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases signed by governments’ heads at High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly held in September, 2011.

This strategy is also very meaningful in protecting and promoting the lives and health of people as well as making all people receive splendid benefits of free medical care system by rasing the work for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases up to a higher stage on a basis of current global activities related to prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and achievements of and lessons learnt from the work for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in our country.

We will actively endeavor to reduce prevalence of and mortality from noncommunicable diseases through achieving the goals of this strategy by all means and, further, to realize successfully grandiose goal of the government to break through the global level of main health indicators including life expectancy.

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1. Background

Today, noncommunicable diseases that consist mainly of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases is becoming a major health issue in all

countries of the world for its high prevalence and mortality. In 2008 only, 36 million people died in the worldwide due to noncommunicable diseases, which covers 63% of total worldwide death and a quarter of which, 9 million people, died prematurely, that is, before 60 years of age. According to the estimation of the experts, the death rate due to noncommunicable diseases will continue to be increased and, by 2030, will cover 75% of all worldwide deaths. Noncommunicable diseases are being increased in almost all regions of the world and, particularly, south-east Asia belongs to regions of highest burden of noncommunicable diseases for this region covers 22% of all worldwide deaths from noncommunicable disease.

Since the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases emerged as an issue of priority, WHO adopted a Global Strategy for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases at fifty third World Health Assembly in May, 2000. Beside of this, many other global strategies were adopted, which includes WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control(2003), the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health(2004), the Global Strategy to Reduce Harmful Use of Alcohol(2010) and Action Plan of South East Asia Region for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020.

The Moscow Declaration of the First Global Ministerial Conference on Noncommunicable Diseases which was held in April, 2011 addressed that prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases should involve multisectoral interventions and collaborations on a large scale.

At the High-Level Meeting of General Assembly of September, 2011, heads of governments signed the Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases. This declaration branded noncommunicable disease as a greatest risk that impedes the socioeconomic development of 21st century and challenges the effort of humankind to achieve the new millennium development goals. And it stressed also that governments of all countries, international communities and sectors of society must be involved and collaborate in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. The declaration proposed the establishment of a mechanism until the end of 2012 so as to monitor and evaluate the activities regarding the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. The meeting served as an important opportunity that promoted global struggle to face noncommunicable diseases as well as a turnover that mobilized governments of all countries and multisectoral organizations to the struggle against noncommunicable diseases.

The WHO recommended all member countries to establish and implement the strategy in

compliance with their situation in order to fulfill the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013–2020.

The main noncommunicable diseases include cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases. These four main diseases occur by four main common risk factors such as smoking, heavy drinking, lack of physical activity and unhealthy diet. As the above mentioned noncommunicable diseases, once occurred, are expensive in the treatment and difficult to get complete cure and tend to result in death, the most cost effective and rational way is to establish measures for the common risk factors before getting the diseases so as to prevent these diseases and control them to not be aggravated if occurred.

Many factors related to the occurrence of noncommunicable diseases lie outside of health sector. Therefore, the effort of health sector alone can not bring due success. Only the cooperation and collaboration of all related sectors such as education, commerce, sports, agriculture, finance, traffics, city administration, legislation, social organizations and mass media can bring due success.

2. Situation of Noncommunicable diseases in our country

The mortality from noncommunicable diseases is 637 per 100,000 population in our country. Among them, the mortality from cancerous diseases is 144, the mortality from cardiovascular diseases and diabetes 284 and the mortality from chronic respiratory diseases 26.5. As for the prevalence, the prevalence of hypertension is 20.4% and 17% in men and women respectively, and the prevalence of cardiovascular diseases 172.1 per 10,000 population, the prevalence of chronic respiratory diseases 26.5 per 10,000 population, the prevalence of cancerous diseases 144 per 10,000 population and prevalence of diabetes is 1.9 per 10,000 population.

The noncommunicable diseases including cardiovascular diseases, cancerous diseases and diabetes constitute main causes that provoke loss of working ability and premature deaths in our country also, as they are so in many other countries.

In order for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, the government defined the preventive medicine as the fundamental of socialist medicine and put the struggle against noncommunicable diseases as one of main health policy from long time ago. The government is strengthening the function and role of the section doctor system, an advanced residents' health care system well established at the primary health care

level, and actively administrating the work for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. As one household doctor takes charge of 130 families in average in our country, the government, through enhancing the role of household doctors, is strengthening the preventive communication and promoting healthy lifestyle among people. The government is also strengthening and improving preventive health care, so as to carry out actively periodical screening and registration of and medical service delivery for patients with chronic diseases including cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes. This preventive health care system for chronic patients, in which household doctors detect chronic patients among their residents in charge as early as possible, register them correctly and treat them under systematical observation, is a most advanced residents' health care system that can only be found in our country.

The health of people is also being improved day by day, as the government is taking measures to promote healthy lifestyle and physical activity among people. The government presented a policy to popularize physical culture and sports and make them part and parcel of life, according to which the government has set the second Sunday of each month as Sports Day and says to it that everyone participates in sports activities, and normalizes the campaign for walking 10,000 steps and organizes various sports games on each occasion. The government has also taken active measures to promote breast feeding and is paying special attention to children' s health care.

The prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases was defined as one of health priorities in Country Cooperation Strategy 2009-2013 and Mid Term Strategic Plan 2010-2015. Multisectoral consultations for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases were held several times and the Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2011-2015 and the Multisectoral Action Plan 2012-2013 were developed and are being actively implemented.

The government made "Tobacco Control Law" newly in 2005 and is strengthening the regulation for all people to abide this law, which was amended in 2009. And also, the government signed Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in 2005 and is carrying out an active campaign against smoking, a main risk factor.

Surveys of risk factors regarding noncommunicable diseases were conducted in 2008 and 2010 in collaboration with WHO. According to the survey that was conducted in selected areas of Pyongyang City regarding risk factors of noncommunicable diseases, the smoking rate and drinking rate among male adults were 55.8% and 20.9% respectively, and the

proportion of high blood pressure among men and women was 19.4% and 18.6% respectively. The proportion of normal body mass index was 60%. There were no cases of chewing tobaccos and female smoking at all in our country.

From 2014, in collaboration with WHO, the pilot introduction of WHO Package of Essential Noncommunicable diseases Interventions (PEN) for main noncommunicable diseases (cardiovascular diseases and diabetes) has been started at primary health care level in selected areas of Pyongyang City.

3. Strategic goal and targets

- Strategic goal

The goal of the strategy is to prolong life expectancy in our country in the period of 2014-2020 by reducing the prevalence of and mortality from noncommunicable diseases and improving people's health.

In detail, to reduce socioeconomic burden of noncommunicable diseases through;

- Reducing prevalence of noncommunicable diseases and proportion of premature death and loss of working ability due to noncommunicable diseases
- Reducing the frequency of risk factors of noncommunicable diseases
- and conducting multisectoral activities to fight with main risk factors of noncommunicable diseases and improve the quality of medical services

- Main targets

1. To establish a mechanism that strengthens inter-sectoral cooperation to increase the effectiveness of the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases
2. To strengthen the research on and evaluation of main noncommunicable diseases and risk factors at primary health care level
3. To reduce the influence of common risk factors of noncommunicable diseases including smoking, unhealthy diet and heavy drinking
4. To improve the treatment and management of noncommunicable diseases at all levels of health care services

5. Principals for the implementation of strategy

In order for effective prevention and control to reduce socioeconomic burden of noncommunicable diseases, the following principals should be sustained in the implementation of strategy.

First: The prevention and control should be done preferentially at primary health care level

Second: Various risk factors should be managed in an integrated way and the general management should focus on the four main noncommunicable diseases, that is, cardiovascular diseases, cancerous diseases, chronic obstructive respiratory diseases and diabetes.

Third: The preventive communication and activities should be carried out throughout lifespan.

Fourth: Residents and patients themselves should actively participate in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and they should raise their responsibility for health of themselves, their family and relatives.

Fifth: Multisectoral collaboration for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases between governmental organizations, social organizations and relevant sectors should be strengthened.

6. Priorities and activities

1) To establish effective policy to strengthen multisectoral collaboration for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases

It is important to establish effective policy to create an environment that enables individuals, families and communities to select healthy lifestyle and enjoy healthy life. First of all, the capacity and qualification of policy makers should be enhanced. And a mechanism to strengthen the collaboration with all sectors of society should be established.

Activities:

1. Organize a coordination committee for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases that consists of staff of sectors related to the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases.
2. Establish measures to reduce the influence of main risk factors of noncommunicable diseases and to prevent diseases.
3. Implement actively the requests of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in order to reduce smoking rate, one of the risk factors of noncommunicable diseases.
4. Establish and implement regulations to reduce heavy drinking rate.

5. Establish measures to reduce salt intake
6. Make people maintain healthy diet

2) To conduct research on and evaluation of main noncommunicable diseases and their risk factors at primary health care level

It is important to make correct evaluation of current epidemiological status by conducting a survey on the level of noncommunicable diseases and risk factors, provided that no such surveys were conducted with detail among people in recent years. And also, it is necessary to study and introduce WHO recommended methodology to integrate and manage main noncommunicable diseases at primary health care level.

Activites:

1. Conduct a survey to evaluate the level of prevalence of main noncommunicable diseases and their risk factors at primary health care level.
2. Evaluate the capacity of concerned primary health care level for the prevention, control and management of main noncommunicable diseases.
3. Detect, at primary health care level, groups vulnerable to main noncommunicable diseases and take due measures.

3) To conduct activities to prevent and control the risk factors of main noncommunicable diseases among individuals and all population.

It is most effective way to raise awareness of people about smoking, heavy drinking, unhealthy diet and lack of physical activities as main risk factors of noncommunicable diseases and to strengthen the communication on the necessity of promoting healthy lifestyle. This must be done under close relation with public health and primary health care.

Activities:

1. Enhance the role of health workers and volunteers including household doctors as well as the awareness of people about the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and risk factors through mass media, public health reference books and IEC materials.
2. Promote healthy lifestyle throughout lifespan starting from infant period.
3. Make people participate actively in the health promotion and the prevention

and control of noncommunicable diseases.

4) To improve the quality of medical services on noncommunicable diseases at all health care levels

Improving the quality of the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of noncommunicable diseases at all health care levels is the decisive way to reduce the prevalence and proportion of premature death and loss of working ability due to noncommunicable diseases.

Activities:

1. Activities for improving the quality of medical services at all levels, particularly at primary health care level, must focus on the early detection and control of groups vulnerable to noncommunicable diseases.
2. Introduce actively WHO recommended methodology to integrate and manage the main noncommunicable diseases at primary health care level.
3. Improve the supply of and access to the essential drugs and equipments needed to diagnosis, treatment and management of main noncommunicable diseases in the health facilities.
4. Enhance the qualification of health professionals in order to improve the prevention, early detection and treatment of main noncommunicable diseases.

7. Finance of Strategy implementation

The implementation of the strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases will be financed by following sources.

- State budget
- Donations of institutes, enterprises and social organizations
- Support fund of international donors and international organizations

8. Monitoring and evaluation

The Political Declaration adopted at High-Level Meeting of General Assembly proposed the establishment of an international mechanism to control noncommunicable diseases as one of the goals in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. The country strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases also aims at achieving this goal.

The WHO recommends the following monitoring and evaluation indicators.

- The level of risk factors of noncommunicable diseases (Monitoring and evaluation of risk factors)
- Prevalence of and mortality from noncommunicable diseases (Monitoring and evaluation of the consequence of noncommunicable diseases)
- Monitoring and evaluation of health care system for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases (Monitoring and evaluation of methodology and capacity)

In order to prevent and control successfully the noncommunicable diseases, the implementation process must be monitored and evaluated thoroughly and be improved according to the result. The Ministry of Public Health takes the responsibility of controlling entire process of strategy implementation, reports the result to Multisectoral Coordination Committee and takes necessary measures. The implementation bodies besides of the Ministry of Public Health communicate annually to the Ministry of Public Health about their activities.

The monitoring of risk factors and determinants of noncommunicable diseases and the monitoring of diseases may be done in a way of collecting periodical screening data and patient clinical chart data through routine health statistic system. In order for the success in monitoring, it is important to ensure the quality of statistics in primary health care facilities and district and county hospitals as well as the continuity of patient registration. As for the death data, it must be collected using national death reporting system and compared with data aggregated to the Ministry of Public Health, Public Security Agencies and resident administration institutes in order to ensure its quality.

Goals by indicators

Basing on the strategic goals proposed in the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020 adopted at World Health Assembly and the goals of South East Asia Action Plan 2013-2020 signed at WHO South East Asia Regional Meeting, goals by indicators to be achieved until 2025 are as follows.

1. Reduce the total death rate from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases by 25%.

2. Reduce the smoking rate among men of 15 years of age and above by 30%.
3. Reduce by 10% the heavy drinking rate.
4. Reduce the proportion of lack of physical activities by 10%.
5. Reduce the salt intake by 30%
6. Reduce the incidence of hypertension by 25%.
7. Make the number of residents who are treated with medicines and by doctors in order to prevent heart attack and cerebral apoplexy reach to 50%
8. Provide more than 80% of all medicines and equipments needed for the treatment of noncommunicable diseases at health facilities
9. Maintain current incidence of obesity and diabetes.
10. Increase early detection rate of cancerous diseases by ensuring 90% of periodical screening rate among men and women of 40 years of age and above

Action plan for strategy implementation

Detailed action plan in order to ensure the general implementation of the Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2014-202 in the DPR of Korea will be developed.

Action plan by risk factors

Activities for tobacco control

Content	Implementation body
1. Amend the National Tobacco Control Law, and supervise and monitor its implementation.	Standing Committee, Cabinet, Ministry of Public Health, Committee of Education
2. Conduct active communication about the Tobacco Control Law and IEC activities about the risk and consequences of direct and indirect smoking through mass media.	Working People's organization, Publication and press sector, Ministry of Public Health, Committee of Education
3. Put No Smoking marks and posters at all no-smoking places indicated by Tobacco Control Law	Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Public Health, Committee of Education
4. Ensure that the image warning about the risk and harm of tobacco will cover more than 70% of the surface of cigarette box	Standing Committee, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Food and Daily Necessities, Ministry of Public Health
5. Conduct periodical survey on smoking status and disseminate findings of surveys	Ministry of Public Health, Committee of Education
6. Carry out communication activities to generalize the experiences of the people who stopped smoking as well as to disseminate various stop-smoking method	Ministry of Public Health, Committee of Education, Research and Dissemination Center of No-smoking

7. Include a subject on the harm of tobacco in the school course and strengthen the education of students	Committee of Education, Ministry of Public Health
8. Offer residents periodical consultation on stop-smoking at the primary health care level.	Ministry of Public Health
9. Collaborate actively with international organizations concerned with tobacco control	Ministry of Public Health

Activities for heavy drinking control

Content	Implementation body
10. Include activities for heavy drinking control in national policy and strategy for the prevention of noncommunicable diseases	Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Food and Daily Necessities
11. Publish and distribute communication materials on the harm of heavy drinking and its influence to diseases occurrence and actively carry out communication activities through household doctors	Working People's organization, Publication and press sector, Ministry of Public Health, Committee of Education
12. Strengthen the legal regulation on driving drunk and working drunk	Public security Agency
13. Prohibit illegal production and sale of alcoholic beverage and establish the rule to sell alcoholic beverage at designated places	Public security Agency, Ministry of Food and Daily Necessities, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Public Health
14. Strengthen the survey and information dissemination on heavy drinking among adults	Ministry of Public Health

Activities for control of unhealthy diet

Content	Implementation body
15. Include activities for promoting healthy diet in national policy and strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases	Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Food and Daily Necessities
16. Communicate actively for Increasing the usage of iodine salt and promoting breast feeding	Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Food and Daily Necessities, Ministry of Commerce
17. Communicate actively for promoting folk dishes and maintaining healthy diet	Ministry of Food and Daily Necessities, Working People's organization, Publication and press sector, Ministry of Public Health
18. Strengthen researches to provide scientific inspection of produced foodstuff	Ministry of Food and Daily Necessities, Ministry of Public Health
19. Educate children on the harmful effect of processed and instant foods in various forms and ways	Committee of Education, Ministry of Public Health

Activities for control of lack of physical activity

Content	Implementation body
20. Include activities for control of lack of physical activity in national policy and strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases	Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Physical Culture and Sports
21. Develop and disseminate activities for health including rhythmic gymnastics and health Taekwon-do in order to create atmosphere in which everybody likes physical culture and sports	Ministry of Physical Culture and Sports, Publication and press sector
22. Carry out activities to create a heat wave of physical culture and sports all over the country through operation of monthly Sports Day	Ministry of Physical Culture and Sports, Publication and press sector
23. Convert the affair of building and using many more places for physical culture and sports into a nationwide affair	Standing Committee, Ministry of Physical Culture and Sports
24. Organize widely folk games on the occasion of holidays and make schools organize physical culture and sports activities after school	Ministry of Physical Culture and Sports, Committee of Education
25. Communicate actively about the importance of physical culture and sports and their influence onto health through mass media	Ministry of Physical Culture and Sports, Publication and press sector