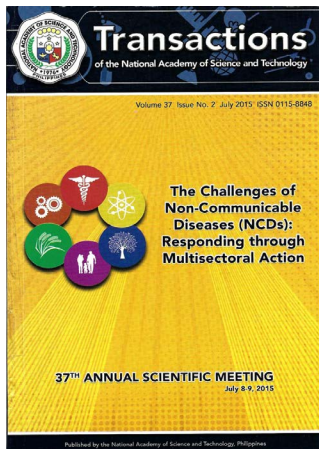


Transactions NAST PHL, is the official journal of the National Academy of Science and Technology Philippines. It has traditionally published papers presented during the Academy's Annual Scientific Meeting since 1979 to promote science-based policy discussions of and recommendations on timely and relevant national issues as part of its functions as a national science academy. Starting in 2021, this journal has been open to contributions from the global scientific community in all fields of science and technology.



The Challenges of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs): Responding through Multisectoral Action

RESOLUTIONS

Citation

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Science and Technology
**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
PHILIPPINES**

**THE CHALLENGE OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
DEMANDING MULTI-SECTORAL ACTION**

Republic of the Philippines
37th Annual Scientific Meeting
8-9 July, 2015
The Manila Hotel, One Rizal Park, Manila

RESOLUTIONS

After a thorough evaluation of the evidence on incidence, fatality and causality; after several long hours of meetings and roundtable discussions with all stakeholders; and after consideration of a broad range of analyses and proposed solutions; the National Academy of Science and Technology Philippines (NAST PHL), as the highest advisory body to the nation on matters of science, on their 37th Annual Scientific Meeting, forward the following resolutions to the President of the Philippines and the Cabinet, to Congress and to society-at-large.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1. We declare a crisis of lifestyle-related, non-communicable diseases (NCD) in the country, of unheralded extent and unprecedented severity, leading to the death of 300,000 Filipinos a year (WHO 2010) – more deaths than any single disaster, calamity or epidemic seen before.

These diseases include stroke, heart attack, cancer, chronic lung disease, and many others. Implicated lifestyles include smoking, consumption of unhealthy food, and inadequate physical inactivity. Contrary to common belief, these conditions affect not just the aged, but also the young, including productive citizens in the prime of their life. Though popularly known as diseases of affluence, in truth, they cause more deaths amongst the poor than amongst the rich.

Citation: NAST.PHL. 2015. NAST.PHL Resolutions 2015. The challenges of non-communicable diseases (NCDs): Responding through multisectoral action. Transactions NAST.PHL 37 (2): doi.org/10.57043/transnastphl.2015.2840

While lifestyle is generally regarded as a choice made by individuals, there is overwhelming scientific evidence that choices are heavily influenced by the environment. People consume unhealthy food because unhealthy food is cheaper, advertisements surround us, and food establishments allow no choice. People don't engage in sufficient physical activity because there is little access to open space, and no opportunities for non-motorized transport. The prevalence of smoking is high because tobacco is cheap, and we are flooded with promotional materials at an early age.

Rather than being mainly a personal choice then, lifestyle is in fact largely an adaptation to how we have built the world around us. Therefore rather than focusing on just public education, solutions that bear upon this epidemic must involve how communities are built, how businesses are run and regulated, and how laws are crafted and implemented. NCD control measures, therefore, must extend beyond the health sector, into the realm of society at large, including engineers, architects, farmers, fisherfolk, teachers, businessmen, lawmakers, community leaders, family members, and more. There are no exceptions. All of society must be involved in addressing this epidemic.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2. We urgently propose the formation of a National Commission for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases, under the Office of the President, tasked to develop and oversee societal strategies for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

The commission shall be composed of selected cabinet secretaries or undersecretaries from pertinent departments, lawmakers, academicians, scientists local government leaders and society/private sector representatives.

This national commission shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Analysis and oversight of existing policies, laws, plans and programs that may have an adverse impact on lifestyle;
2. Development of a research agenda for the development and continuous assessment of strategies that promote a healthy lifestyle; and
3. Formulation of recommendations for new policies and legislation if necessary.

The range of policies to be addressed includes:

1. Policies that encourage a healthy diet, for example, reducing the price of healthy food relative to unhealthy food, requiring provision of healthy options in food establishments, and instituting effective rules on food labelling;
2. Policies to incentivize the redesign of urban and rural infrastructure to provide adequate open space for physical activity, and to encourage non-motorized transportation;
3. Policies that further reduce the prevalence of smoking, such as strict prohibition of smoking in public places, total ban on tobacco advertisements, and a further increase in taxes on tobacco; and
4. Policies on environmental protection and pollution control.

Conclusion

While great progress has been achieved in the field of curative medicine, strategies for health promotion have lagged behind in our country. The main cause of this lag is the misconception that NCDs are diseases of individuals, solely related to lifestyle choices that they make. Based on current scientific knowledge, this theory is no longer tenable. Lifestyle is not a mere matter of personal choice. It is largely an adaptation to the world we have built around us. This means NCDs are not just diseases of individuals; they are diseases of society that will take societal reform to prevent.

NCD's have invaded us quietly and imperceptibly in the past few decades, and now it they have reached a critical level. Millions of Filipinos are affected, and unless something is done, hundreds of thousands will continue to die unnecessarily each year, at huge economic and social cost.

We need to do something about the situation. For the sake of our people, we need to do it now.

ABOUT NAST

The National Academy of Science and Technology, Philippines (NAST, PHL) is the country's highest advisory body to the government and the science community on matters related to science and technology. It also has the mandate to recognize outstanding achievements in science and technology made by Filipino scientists in all fields of science.

VISION, MISSION AND MANDATE

The National Academy of Science and Technology, Philippines, founded in 1976, continues to stand today with a firm resolve to faithfully pursue:

Its VISION: A Progressive Philippines Anchored on Science

Its MISSION:

1. To recognize exemplary science and technology achievements among the young and among peers.
2. To encourage individual Academy members to continue their scholarly pursuits thereby making the Academy the principal reservoir of scientific and technological expertise in the nation.
3. To provide independent and science-based advice on problems facing the nation and the world.
4. To link with like-minded institutions and individuals in promoting scientific achievement in the Philippines and abroad.
5. To promote a strong science culture in Philippine society.

Its MANDATE:

1. To recognize outstanding achievements in science and technology as well as provide meaningful incentives to those engaged in scientific and technological researches (PD 1003-A)
2. To advise the President and the Cabinet on matters related to science and technology (EO 818).
3. To engage in projects and programs designed to recognize outstanding achievements in science and promote scientific productivity (EO 818).

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