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<th>Translating tobacco related research into public health actions</th>
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Research in Hong Kong started in mid 1970s

- First HK paper on smoking and lung cancer 1979 (Doll & Hill 1950)
- First 2 papers on passive smoking and lung cancer, Japan and Athens 1981
- First HK paper on passive smoking and lung cancer showed no association 1982
- 1992, US EPA report: 4 HK papers on passive smoking and lung cancer, excess risk 48%
Tobacco deaths in HK (1)

September 8, 1995 Mackay J
“According to government estimates, cigarettes kill over 3,500 people every year” (SCMP)

September 11, 1995 Fletcher RJ, Tobacco Institute of Hong Kong Ltd
“‘government estimates’ represent nothing more than the result of an exercise in mathematical speculation undertaken by Professor Mackay and her colleagues, and need to be understood as such”
Robert Fletcher, Tobacco Institute of HK

COSH’s move to use the investigation (US EPA report) to support its campaign “was misleading and did not take into account the facts”.  

(SCMP, Jan 8, 1993)

The Tobacco Institute vows to sue the Government if it follows the lead of other countries and introduces a ban (on advertising and sponsorship) 

(SCMP, April 12, 1997)

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Tobacco deaths in HK (2)

Tsang HF, Department of Health, 1995
5682 (18.9%) of 30,222 deaths in 1993 were attributed to smoking (based on US risk estimates)

(HK Practitioner)

5720 (18.2%) of 31349 deaths in 1998 attributable to smoking, based on HK Death Registry study

(BMJ)
Tobacco Control Strategy Based on Scientific Research

- For many years, The University of Hong Kong has been collaborating with the Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health and various bodies to conduct a series of local scientific research on second hand smoke effects on different groups of people.

- Apart from confirming the results with those elsewhere, these local studies also revealed the public demand and pressing need for tightened tobacco control policy in Hong Kong, hence the pressing need for Government in implementing stringent tobacco control measures.
Major Scientific Researches

1. Smoking Costs Hong Kong Over $5 Billion Every Year (2005)
2. The Impact of Smoke-free Policies on the Patronage of Restaurants in HK (2000)
4. Passive Smoking and Risks for Heart Disease and Cancer in HK Catering Workers (2001)
6. 1,324 Deaths per Year in Non-smokers in Hong Kong (2005)

The Youth Smoking and Health Survey

- The first Survey conducted in 1994 by Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health (COSH) with HKU
  - Junior secondary school students smoking patterns;
  - Recent tobacco usage trends
  - Preferences for brands relating to advertisements
  - Excess respiratory symptoms
Research Outcomes

- Smoking prevalence increased in both males and females
  - Most striking in junior forms.
- Brand preferences in relation to the attractiveness of advertisements increased smoking
- Student smokers and passive smokers had more respiratory symptoms

Tobacco industries make use of the loopholes in law and continue to promote tobacco products. The government should consider stricter control on tobacco promotion and advertising.

90’s: Publicise Tobacco Harms Directly

Outdoor concert

COSH and Public Transport to deliver no smoking messages
TV Public Service Announcements (PSA)

“Movie Trailers” (1995)
Using scare approach to educate public about the risk of tobacco

“Jokes” (1995)

“Women Killer” (1996)

“Terminator” (1996)
Published in 1998 June, COSH and HKU publicized a survey on Hong Kong primary 3-6 children.

To study association between
- Active and passive smoking
- Risks of reparatory illness.

Research Outcomes

- Even short smoking duration
  - More respiratory symptoms;
- More exposed to SHS
  - More respiratory symptoms;

Urgent needs to create a smoke-free environment, including home and public places, so as to protect the children.
The Hong Kong Children’s Charter - “We Sign Campaign”

On the World No Tobacco Day in 1998, COSH launched the charter to affirm that children have the right to be free from smoking.

Smoking in the Young Working Population in Hong Kong

- This study was by
  - The Department of Community Medicine of the University of Hong Kong
  - COSH
  - The Hong Kong Occupational Safety and Health Council

- >10,000 persons aged 15 years and above.

- Released at a press conference on 10 May 1999.
Research Outcomes

- Smoking was serious in the young working population (age 15-19)
- Banning smoking in the workplaces
  - Help to reduce smoking in young people.

The study recommended:
- Banning of smoking in the workplace,
- Strengthening of health education
- Providing smoking cessation services

NO-SMOKING DAY IN THE WORKPLACE

- May 2nd, 2000 as the ‘No-Smoking Day in the Workplace’;
- Promoted by
  - MTR Ads
  - TV channels
  - Popular magazines.
Public Opinion on Smoke-free Restaurants

- The **1st restaurant-related smoke-free provisions** of the new ordinance came into effect in 1999.

- To understand the **public’s opinion, awareness and attitude on the new ordinance**, Department of Community Medicine, The University of Hong Kong commissioned by COSH to conduct a telephone interview.

- In March 2000, COSH and HKU published the report.

Research Outcomes

- High exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) in restaurants.

- The law was: insufficient and ineffective in protecting people from **ETS exposure** in restaurants.

- Most people would
  - Go more often to restaurants with non-smoking areas,
  - Choose to eat in non-smoking areas.

**Only through total smokefree legislation**, the health of customers and restaurant staff can be **further protected**.
Survey conducted by
- Department of Community Medicine, University of Hong Kong;
- Department of Community and Family Medicine, Chinese University of Hong Kong,
- COSH

Urine samples for cotinine as an indicator of passive smoking in non-smokers;

Combined working-lifetime risks for heart disease and lung cancer.

In May 2001, COSH and HKU published the report "Passive Smoking and Risks for Heart Disease and Cancer in Hong Kong Catering Workers".

Average catering worker
- Exposed to second-hand smoke at work:
- Over a 40-year working lifetime.
- 3% combined excess risk for heart disease and lung cancer death

This excess risk would lead to a total of 6,000 deaths; 150 per year.

Ventilation engineering offers no practical solutions

Only cost-effective methods: introduce total smoke-free regulations
**Late 90’s:** Emphasize on the hazards of second-hand smoking

**TV PSA**


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**The Impact of Smoke-Free Policies on the Patronage of Restaurants in Hong Kong 2001**

In September 2001, COSH and HKU published the report.
Research Outcomes

- Smoking ban
  - Generate new business
  - By a large margin.

- Consistent with overseas findings.

- Overwhelming demand for smoke-free catering.

**Reinforces** the public’s plea for **legislation** of a total smoking ban in restaurants. Second-hand smoke in restaurants are **hazardous to health of both staff and patronage.**

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**World’s First Discovery: Second-Hand Smoke Increases Stroke Death by 50% in Non-smokers**

- A study carried out by
  - Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, HKU,
  - Department of Health
  - University of Oxford.

- Medical Journal (BMJ), one of the world’s leading weekly medical journals, on 27 January 2005.
Passive smoking
- An important preventable cause of deaths from stroke.
- Much increased risk of serious and life-threatening diseases

1,324 deaths per year in non-smokers from heart, cancer, stroke and lung diseases
Does other People’s Second Hand Tobacco Smoke Harm the Health of Smokers?

- The University of Hong Kong, School of Public Health and Department of Community Medicine, led by Professors TH Lam and AJ Hedley and Dr LM Ho, are the first in the world to report their findings in a renowned international refereed journal Tobacco Control in October 2005.


Research Outcomes

- The higher SHS exposure of smokers,
  - ↑ Acute and chronic respiratory symptoms.
  - ↑ Utilisation of health care resources.

- Smokers were seriously harmed by sidestream smoke.

- Extends children and non-smokers’ protection to include smokers.

  - Smokes in smoking rooms cause additional harm to smokers.
  - Ventilation system and smoking rooms are unsafe.
  - Tobacco control policy should not include “compromising” regulations.
21st Century: Translating Scientific Evidence to Impressive Messages

- The message “every year at least 1,324 people die from second-hand smoking”
- Based on a scientific research “Second-hand Smoke Increase Stroke Deaths by 50% in Non-smokers” conducted by the University of Hong Kong.
- Three PSA: “Second Hand Gum”, “Second Hand Tooth Pick”, “BBQ Pork Bun” were used to raise awareness on the health hazards of second-hand smoking.

Second Hand Gum (2005)
Second Hand Tooth Pick (2005)

BBQ Pork Bun (2005)
“Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Ordinance 2006”

19 Oct 2006
The Third Reading of the “Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill 2005” was passed by the LegCo, expanding the statutory No-Smoking Areas to include but not limited to indoor workplaces, restaurants and public pleasure grounds.

21st Century:
Using creative approach to translate the research evidence into a impressive message

New regulation implemented on Jan 1, 2007, public can enjoy smoke-free environment in more areas.

→ Overseas studies shows more cessation.

COSH launched a new series of PSA to promote cessation.
“Good Man” (2008)

The new TV PSA “Quit to Win” conveys the message that cessation can bring smokers both health and economical benefits, and encourages smokers to quit smoking.

Campaign Advocating for Raising Tobacco Tax

- WHO: 70% increase in the price of tobacco -> prevent up to a 1/4 of all smoking-related deaths worldwide.

- World Bank Report: Tax increases leading to rise of the retail price of cigarettes by 10% worldwide cause 40 millions smokers alive in 1995 to quit, and prevent a minimum of 10 million tobacco-related deaths.

Source: WHO MPOWER Report 2008
Despite the many benefits of tax increases, tobacco tax has been frozen in Hong Kong since 2001. COSH proposes government to adopt a regular tobacco tax increase policy, with a rate at least 5% above Consumer Price Index.

COSH started out a campaign by using booths, newspaper ads and online web voting in Jan 2009.

As in Hong Kong, WHO cited 6920 deaths were caused by smoking or second-hand smoking.

COSH Campaign

- Jan 7, 2009 Ming Pao Tax Increase Ads
- Booths for Signatures and Online Votes
- Support by Medical Students
Conclusions

- Challenges:
  - Tobacco Industry’s lobbying and PR strategies;
  - Promotion through loopholes in the law;
  - Lobbying Government against legislation;
  - Tobacco-related research provides objective evidence for tobacco control, and it becomes a very important tool to facilitate effective policies.

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