



Smoking and COVID-19: Data Driven Risk

Messaging

Project Information

- ◆ Department: Center of Excellence for Applied Epidemiology
- ◆ Unit: Research and Policy

SCOPE OF WORK

The project's main goal is to increase awareness about the importance of having smoking-free policies in public places through educating the public about the harms of second-hand smoking especially around children in multiple settings. This was implemented through developing country-tailored and culturally appropriate media messages. The project was implemented over a period of around 18 months.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

“Smoking and COVID 19: Data-Driven Risk Messaging” second phase was implemented over 18 months as a continuation of the first year. In this phase, GHD, in collaboration with the CDC and Vital strategies, concentrated the efforts in Palestine and Jordan. The decision was influenced by the data from the first phase indicating policy shifts toward more robust tobacco control measures were emerging in both countries.

The specific outcome that this project planned to achieve was addressing the harms of secondhand smoke, particularly for young children and advocated for public compliance with and enforcement of smoke-free policies. This goal was achieved by providing country partners with sufficient funds and technical expertise to develop and disseminate risk messaging through mass media outlets. The project followed two phases of activities. The initial phase involved the implementation of the risk messaging campaigns and the second phase was the Monitoring and evaluation for the outcomes of the project.

BENEFICIARIES

This project intended to reach male and female tobacco users between ages 18 to 55 in Jordan and educational facilities (public and private) and health facilities in the West Bank

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

The project was implemented in two countries of the EMR region: Jordan and Palestine.

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| Project Start and End Date | January 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024 |
| Partner Organizations | Ministry of Health in Jordan, Palestine, Royal Health Awareness Society, Birzet University |
| Funded by | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) |
| Collaborators | Vital Strategies |

PROJECT PHASES

The project involved two phases:

Phase I – The first phase involved refining the workplan proposals of the country partners.

Phase II- The second phase provided technically assistance to the country partners in developing and disseminating risk messaging through mass media outlets.

Phase III – The third phase involved the Monitoring and Evaluation activity. The project was monitored over the period of implementation through periodic review and feedback on Fidelity and Dissemination Reports. Additionally, the project outcomes and evaluation were assessed in both countries in terms of the short-term outcomes of the disseminated messages on producing the desired change in awareness, knowledge, and behavior with regards to smoking within the populations served.

Currently . . .

The prevalence of current tobacco use among adults in the involved countries is relatively high compared with the global rates. Jordan marked the highest percentage of 41% followed by Egypt, Iraq, and Palestine 22.8%, 20.7%, and 20.2%¹, respectively. Recent studies demonstrated the association between smoking and the severity of COVID-19 infection in which the harms of smoking, and the risk of serious infection, suffering and death, are exacerbated by COVID.

What's next . . .

The project was successful in achieving its goals and therefore it will be extended in two of the four countries because mass-reaching communication campaigns can be a powerful tool for shaping social norms in terms of tobacco use, limiting tobacco initiation, and promoting tobacco cessation to reduce mortality and morbidity in the region.

By Numbers: Total Estimated Reach

Jordan

- Social media: More than 10 million views

Palestine

- Radio: 1.7 million
- Social media: 3.6 million

GHD|EMPHNET Information: Global Health Development (GHD) and Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) works at achieving its mission by responding to public health needs with deliberate efforts that allow for health promotion and disease prevention.

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