

International Network of Women Against Tobacco

Advisory Board

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Editorial

Welcome to the very first INWAT Europe Newsletter. We are the European branch of INWAT, the International Network of Women Against Tobacco. Our network consists of a group of multi-disciplinary, dedicated professionals from a number of European countries, who share a strong commitment to tobacco control.

Our mission is to reduce tobacco use among European girls and women and eliminate their exposure to second hand smoke.

An alarming rise in the incidence of lung and other tobacco related cancers in women has taken place over the past two decades in the EU. In a number of European countries, lung cancer deaths in women have already surpassed breast cancer deaths. Women are dying of preventable diseases and we aim to reduce this mortality and morbidity caused by tobacco use. Levels of smoking in women are highest in the poorest communities and are linked to multiple social and economic disadvantages, ill health and poor life expectancy. This is why it is important for us to address the gender and inequality gap and support the work and leadership of women in tobacco control.

Our work promotes the full implementation of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. We advocate and seek to influence key policy decisions at EU and government level. We work together with WHO Regional Office for Europe who are publishing "Empower Women: Facing the challenge of tobacco use in Europe" which is featured in this newsletter. Also this year we are delighted that our founding member, Patti White, has been honoured with the 2015 Luther Terry Award.

Our goal is to achieve a tobacco free society and we welcome support from all who share our vision.

*Norma Cronin, ASH Ireland,
INWAT Europe Board member*



Among European women, death rates from lung cancer will exceed death rates from breast cancer – predictions for 2015

In 2015, more European women will die from lung cancer than from breast cancer for the first time, according to a study conducted by researchers from Italy and Switzerland. The study, published in the journal *Annals of Oncology* in late January, predicts that the overall

cancer death rate will continue to decline in the European Union with the exceptions of lung cancer in women and pancreatic cancer in both sexes (see figure).

The researchers evaluated cancer death rates from stomach, colorectum, pancreas, lung, breast, uterus, prostate, leukemias and total cancers in the 28 European Union member states with focus on the most populous countries – France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the UK – and made predictions for the year 2015.

The estimates of the study reveal that there will be a total of 1,359,100 deaths from cancer in the EU in 2015 – 766,200 in men and 592,900 in women, corresponding to standardised death rates of 138.4 per 100,000 men and 83.9 per 100,000 women. This represents a decline of 7.5 % and 6 %, respectively, compared to 2009, and an overall fall of 26 % in men and 21 % in women since the peaks in 1988. In contrast, the predicted lung cancer rates in women rise 9 % to 14.24 per 100,000 of the population since 2009, thus, becoming the highest cancer death rate in women, while the death rates for breast cancer are predicted to decrease by 10.2 % to 14.22 per 100,000.

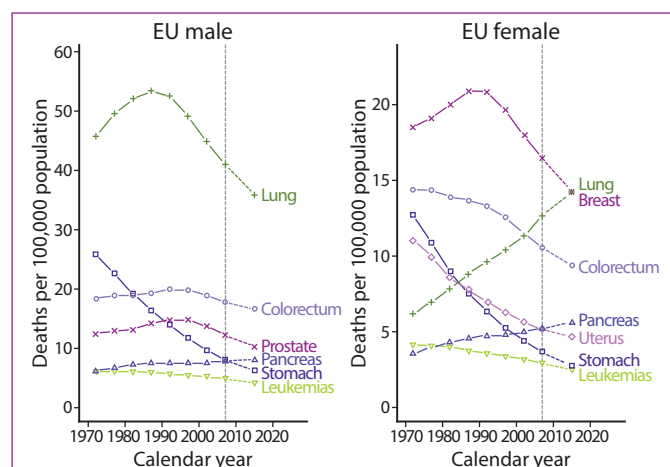
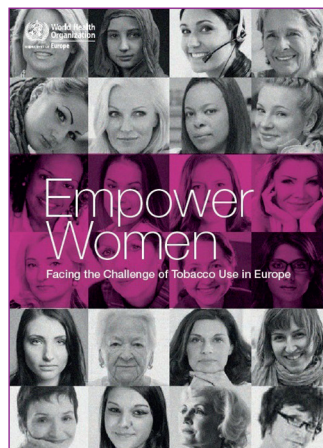


Figure: Age-standardised (world population) EU male and female cancer mortality rate trends in quinquennia from 1970–1974 to 2005–2009 and predicted rates for 2015. Source: Malvezzi et al. (2015), reproduced by German Cancer Research Center, by permission of Oxford University Press

Source: Malvezzi M, Bertuccio P, Rosso T, Rota M, Levi F, La Vecchia C & Negri E (2015) European cancer mortality predictions for the year 2015: does lung cancer have the highest death rate in EU women? *Ann Oncol*, published online 26 January 2015

Empower Women: Facing the challenge of tobacco use in Europe – a new publication from the WHO Europe and INWAT Europe

One of the most striking things about smoking in the WHO European Region in the last two decades has been the increase in smoking prevalence by women in Central and Eastern Europe. Even more



worrying is escalating smoking among girls, according to the Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2013. While most countries show more males than females smoking in the adult population, in several, girls smoking rates have surpassed boys. In other countries, the prevalence gap between boys and girls is very small or on the verge of closing. This upsurge in girls and women's smoking has been because of promotional activities targeting women in Europe including mass media advertising and sponsorship, point-of-sale promotional material in shops, free distribution of tobacco products, internet promotions and importantly, packs and cigarettes designed to appeal especially to women and girls.

The tobacco companies have been aware of women's roles, desires and aspirations in ways that health authorities have not. As in other parts of the world, cigarettes have been peddled to European women as something that will enhance their seductiveness, independence and emancipation. From the late 1980s, European countries went through enormous political, economic and social changes. The transnational tobacco industry moved into these countries and bought the state-owned tobacco companies. They introduced clever marketing, bombarding citizens with glamorous advertising, packaging

and 'corporate social responsibility' schemes in countries that had little experience of charities or other Non-Governmental Organizations.

In response to these promotions and to coincide with World No Tobacco Day 2010, the WHO Regional Office for Europe with the collaboration of INWAT, published a report on the different ways tobacco had been promoted to women and what had been done to oppose it in the Region. "Empower Women: Combating Tobacco Industry Marketing in the WHO European Region" looked specifically at Article 13 of the FCTC which deals with tobacco promotion but also reviewed other issues – labelling and packaging (Article 11) flavourings (Article 9-10), smoke-free air (Article 8), mass media campaigns, communication and health education (Article 12) and cessation (Article 14) – articles that affect girls and women's tobacco use. Both this report and its successor, "Empower Women: Facing the challenge of tobacco use in Europe" (in press) emphasize the importance of the FCTC Articles and Guidelines for implementation in addressing the gender issues in tobacco use. The new report has looked more closely at important issues such as children and women's exposure to second-hand smoke, plain tobacco packaging and graphic health warnings, flavourings that appeal to young people and stop smoking methods that may be more appropriate for women, such as quit-lines and brief advice. Some novel ways of using nicotine – electronic cigarettes and other nicotine delivery devices – as well as hookah smoking and snus are also discussed because of their rising popularity. It also examines the important issue of Article 5.3 and how it can be used to prevent the tobacco industry from thwarting government policy initiatives on tobacco control. These reports and their recommendations may prove valuable for addressing the problems of girls and women's tobacco use in other parts of the world.

The release of the new "Empower Women" publication will be in March 2015 at the 16th World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH) in Abu Dhabi. It will also be available on the WHO Europe website.

Patti White, policy analyst, National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and member of INWAT Europe Advisory Board, winner of a 2015 Luther Terry Award

INWAT Euro would like to applaud our Board Member Patti White who is one of the 2015 awardees of the Luther Terry Awards in the category Outstanding Community Service. Patti White's intellectual rigour, her deep and broad understanding of tobacco control, her support for women's issues and her modesty and generosity mark her out as truly worthy of this Award.



Since Patti White joined ASH UK in 1978, she has worked across all of the major developments in tobacco control internationally, often behind the scenes. At the WHO Regional Office for Europe in the 1980s, she drafted the regional Action Plan

on Tobacco Control and co-organized the first European Conference on Tobacco Policy in 1988. As advisor to the United Kingdom Department of Health, she was instrumental in developing tobacco control policy through the 1990s and initiated crucial research on inequalities, passive smoking, smuggling, taxation, regulation, and women and smoking. Patti is also a founding member and leading advocate for the International Network of Women Against Tobacco (INWAT).

As Technical Advisor to the Union she has provided support and mentorship to Bloomberg grantees globally, including in Poland and Georgia.

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