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Australia: Prevention of Tobacco use and Cigarettes

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Australia: *Prevention of Tobacco use and Cigarettes* Public Health Brief by Shemal Sarma

Overview

The continent of Australia is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean located in the Oceania region. Australia is also surrounded by thousand islands in the central and south pacific ocean region which vary in geographical location and habitat but the three islands of the region Australia. Regions of New Zealand and Papua New Guinea have open plains, volcanic plateaus and mountains. The surrounding sea of Australia and the islands are home to a diverse marine life called the Great Barrier Reef and the North Caledonia Reef (national geographic). The total population of Australia is 24 million people in the 2016 census and more than half the population is in between the ages of 20 and 44 years old (Australian Bureau of Statistics). The most notable difference is the ratio between the sex groups of women and men, with women more than half the population of men in 2016. There is also a higher concentration of Australians living in the great capital cities versus the rest of the Australian plain and Indigenous population in Islands of Australia. About 90 percent of the population is European descent and 3 percent makes up for indigenous aboriginal and torres strait islanders (Britannica).

Governmental Structure

The government of Australia is based on a parliamentary system that is divided into three different branches of government; the executive, the parliamentary government and the judiciary branch. Within the parliament it is broken into further two separate branches, the executive and legislative

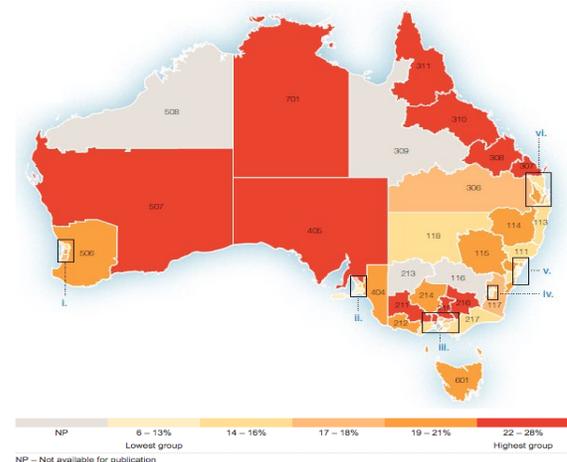
branches are based on the government model of the United Kingdom after Australia independence from commonwealth of nations rule in 1901. The countries executive powers is held within the Queen of the United Kingdom through the commonwealth of nations and can only exercise power by the Governor-General.

Tobacco

Important Public Health concern is the use of tobacco and cigarettes due to the prevalence of tobacco use amongst young adults from the ages of 16 and over. With almost over 97% of the age group 18-24 years have access to cigarettes (Greenhalgh, 2015). The National Health Priority Areas is a key governmental organization that is designated to reduce Australia's burden of disease having investigations into the use of tobacco. Which have revealed to be smoking a key determinant of Australia's health inequality especially amongst adolescents which is a preventable cause of premature deaths. Research on persons with Alcohol Use Disorders (AUD) and Substance Use Disorders (SUD) were 2-3 times more likely to report the lifetime and current use of tobacco and cigarettes with significant between the young aged groups and no differences between gender (Weinberger).

Percentage of adults who are daily smokers, 2011-12

Results for Medicare Local catchments were ranked from highest to lowest and then split into five equal-sized groups. The range within each of the five groups was as follows:



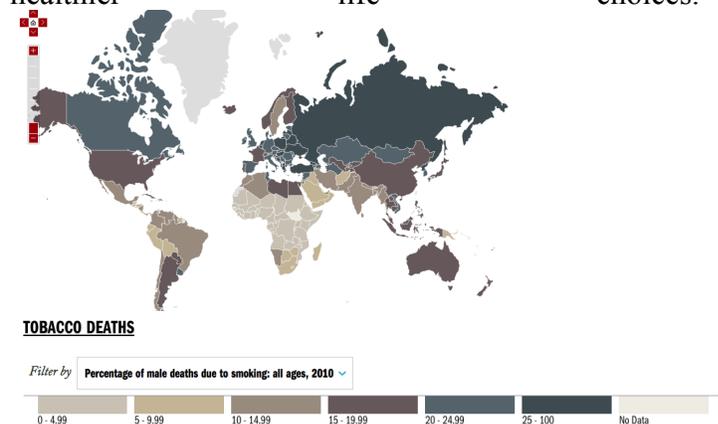
(National Health Performance Authority, 2013)

Prevention of premature mortality rate

The premature death toll in Australia from tobacco use is 60,000 and the social cost of smoking tobacco exceed 31 billion USD in 2015. The current preventative method in Australia adopted by the international framework on the International Convention on Tobacco Control is to discourage the public by educating on the effective methods to reduce smoking (Australian Preventative health Taskforce). However, the percentage that are trying to quit or adolescents that are smoking have not significantly changed during the last decade. The preventative measures of the Australian government include guidelines and restrictions on the advertising and promotion of tobacco use; health warnings on packaging and education on the harmful effects of smoking. This has reduced the prevalence of smoking, however have not reduced the exposure of public to tobacco.

Recommendation

legislative restrictions to be introduced into the Australian law to prohibit the public display of tobacco and public smoking. The best example from my past experience as an international student from Sri Lanka, where the government passed regulation in 2006 to prohibit cigarette use in public places and workplaces. This comprehensive law include measures to restrict smoking in public places; packaging and labeling requirements on 80% of the packaging to include pictures that illustrate the harmful effects of smoking; the restriction of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship in retail; and penalties under the law. This has significantly reduced the presence of cigarettes in public and encourage the public to seek better alternative of healthier life choices.



(tobaccoatlas.org)

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