



Breaking research on e-cigarettes, the impact of tobacco point-of-sale display bans, the growing trend towards flavoured cigarettes and the financial impact of smoking on economies and individuals feature in the scientific programme of the 17th World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH)

Regional science presented at the conference includes smoking and HIV and TB in sub-Saharan Africa and ante-natal tobacco smoke exposure in South Africa

Thursday, 1 February, 2018 (Cape Town, South Africa)--Organisers today announced the scientific programme of the [17th World Conference on Tobacco or Health \(WCTOH\)](#) to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, 7-9 March this year.

The growing debate amongst public health practitioners around tobacco harm reduction is reflected in the conference scientific programme with research on e-cigarettes featuring prominently including a much anticipated study on ***Electronic cigarette use and conventional cigarette smoking initiation among youth in the United States*** authored by researchers based at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States.

A ban on the open display of tobacco products in the United Kingdom was phased in between 2012 and 2015. Measuring the success of that ban, researchers from the University of Stirling in Scotland will present the study: ***The impact of a tobacco point-of-sale display ban on youth in the United Kingdom: findings from a repeat cross-sectional survey pre-, mid- and post-implementation.***

There have been growing concerns amongst tobacco control practitioners around the trend towards the manufacture and marketing of flavoured cigarettes to young adults. The impact of such a trend is the focus of a study by Brazilian researchers: ***Use of flavoured cigarettes in the first few puffs: a step toward smoking initiation and nicotine addiction? Data from a national survey among Brazilian adolescents.***

The emergence of data on the economic impact of tobacco smoking at the country and individual levels is vital too for policy making and both are addressed in the study ***Individual cost of smoking in a study population (US)*** and in the study ***Economics of tobacco control in Nigeria: modelling the fiscal and health effects of a tobacco excise tax change (Nigeria).***

“The high quality of the science being presented in Cape Town comes at a pivotal moment in tobacco control,” said **Professor Harry Lando**, Chair of the 17th WCTOH advisory board. “On the one hand we will see research being presented confirming the astounding public

health progress made to eliminate smoking over the past decade but challengingly, we will also see research on trends that are currently shaping the future battle lines of tobacco control on a global scale.”

“For the past 50 years, WCTOH has been the premier international forum on tobacco control and this year’s event – the first to be held on the African continent – is expected to attract over 2,000 researchers, scientists, civil society, healthcare professionals, policymakers and media representatives from more than 100 countries. Tobacco use is the world’s leading preventable cause of death killing more than seven million people each year,” said **Dr Flavia Senkubuge**, President of the 17th WCTOH.

The conference will also feature a number of key sessions focusing on the upcoming challenges for tobacco control. The opening plenary session, ***Priorities for Tomorrow’s Tobacco Control Agenda and Sustainable Development*** on Wednesday 7 March will feature Head of Secretariat for the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) **Dr Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva**. And on Thursday 8 March – International Women’s Day – WHO Regional Director for Africa, **Dr Matshidiso Moeti** will be joined by **Dr Lorraine Greaves**, Senior Investigator at the British Columbia Centre for Excellence on Women’s Health, for the second plenary which will discuss ***Women, Development and Tobacco Control***.

While tobacco use is decreasing in many countries, evidence has shown that smoking rates in Africa are anticipated to rise dramatically. By 2030 the number of smokers in the region is projected to increase by 40 percent from 2010 levels, unless there is significant intervention. Africa continues to be aggressively targeted by the tobacco industry, as it represents an opportunity for considerable market growth.

“It is highly significant that the WCTOH is taking place on the African continent for the very first time – in many ways the region is a test case for the future direction of tobacco control and its ability in the coming years to rein in aggressive interference from Big Tobacco,” said **José Luis Castro**, Executive Director of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), the WCTOH Secretariat.

The theme of the conference is *Uniting the World for a Tobacco-Free Generation* with an overarching focus on expediting progress to reduce tobacco use in all populations around the world – using new research and innovative approaches in public health, as well as powerful but under-used policies, including tobacco taxation and those aimed at preventing industry interference.

The scientific programme can be viewed [online](#) now.

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Further information:

Media registration is free for all accredited media representatives. In the first instance please email: press@theunion.org

The complete press programme is available [here](#).

For more information on media registration, programme details and interview requests please contact:

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About the 17TH World Conference on Tobacco or Health

The 17th World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH) will be held in Cape Town, South Africa from 7-9 March 2018. It will unite researchers, academics, non-governmental organisations, civil society, scientists, healthcare professionals and public officials working on all aspects of tobacco control from more than 100 countries.

Convened by WCTOH's Advisory Board, the Cape Town Consortium and the Conference Secretariat (The Union), WCTOH is a call for a collective resolution to fight tobacco use by working together and integrating tobacco control into our health and development goals. Held every three years, WCTOH is the premier international conference on tobacco control.

The conference theme – *Uniting the World for a Tobacco-Free Generation* – recognises that tobacco control is a global issue, crossing all geographic boundaries. The World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) stands as the backdrop for the conference and for our global response to the tobacco epidemic. It is the only internationally, legally-binding health treaty of the 21st century. Only by coming together are we able to create a tobacco-free generation.

The conference programme includes plenary and abstract sessions, symposia, posters and workshops on the many aspects of the tobacco epidemic. It will highlight the efforts being made to reduce demand for tobacco by putting in place MPOWER measures in line with the WHO FCTC.