

Evaluating the Economic Benefit of Reduced Tobacco Use in Russia: A Study Determining Where Money Previously Spent on Tobacco is Directed

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Goal/Purpose

To produce evidence that tobacco control in Russia will be economically beneficial rather than detrimental.

Importance of Project

Tobacco is killing millions of people each year, and it limits user's economies. The Federation of Russia spends US\$ billions on tobacco annually. Because tobacco companies have argued that controlling and decreasing tobacco use will harm economies and create job loss, Russian economists and leaders have not taken needed action on long-term improvements in quality of life, health, and their economy. Little information exists on Russian economic gains from tobacco control. By surveying where money is used once people quit smoking, we can offer more evidence-based data for economists, thus prompting a paradigm shift, leading to necessary change in Russian tobacco control.

Main Proposal Body

Background

Tobacco is becoming one of the single largest contributors to global death (Esson, Katharine M. & Stephen R. Leeder, 2004), accounting for 12 percent of global adult mortality (Mackay, Judith, Michael Eriksen, & Omar Shafey, 2006, 38). Use of tobacco not only induces substantial health effects, but also significantly increases the economic cost to each country. The Federation of Russia today has one of the lowest life expectancy rates in the world (59 years for males and 72 year for females) (Core Health Indicators, 2005) as well as a huge economic burden resulting from tobacco and cigarette use. Prevalence of tobacco use is above 60 percent for males, under 20 percent for females, and between 16 to 29.9 percent for all adolescents in Russia (Mackay, Judith, Michael Eriksen, & Omar Shafey, 2006, 22-31).

By the year 2010, global economic costs from tobacco are estimated to be US\$500 billion (Mackay, Judith, Michael Eriksen, & Omar Shafey, 2006). Increased research needs to be done to fully define the economic implications of tobacco use in Russia as not enough data currently exists. But, if one compares the economic burden on other countries with similar tobacco use, health costs, and importation rates, Russia's economic burden can be estimated in the hundreds of US\$ billions (Mackay, Judith, Michael Eriksen, & Omar Shafey, 2006). Russia is the largest cigarette importer in the world (Mackay, Judith, Michael Eriksen, & Omar Shafey, 2006, 54) and bears heavy economic weight associated with tobacco.

Tobacco companies argue that reduced consumption of tobacco products due to strong control efforts will cause significant job loss. However, a falling demand in tobacco does not cause falling employment rates (Warner, K.E., G. A. Fulton, P. Nicolas, & D. R. Grimes, 1996; Jha, Prabhat and Frank Chaloupka, 2000). Money that Russian smokers

once spent on cigarettes can instead be spent on other goods and services, thereby generating new jobs to replace those lost from the tobacco industry (Curbing the Epidemic, 2007). Studies show that most countries would see no net job losses, and that a few would even see net job gains, if tobacco consumption fell (Warner, K.E., G. A. Fulton, P. Nicolas, & D. R. Grimes, 1996; Jha, Prabhat and Frank Chaloupka, 2000; Curbing the Epidemic, 2007).

Nutrition, disease control and overall quality of life also improves when money is redirected and spent on food. As this occurs in other countries, the economic burden associated with poor nutrition is lowered. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), if two-thirds of money spent on cigarettes in the country of Bangladesh were instead spent on food, more than 10 million people could be saved from malnutrition (Esson, Katharine M. & Stephen R. Leeder, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

The Health Behavior and Theories course at BYU teaches the Stages of Change model by James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente. This model describes how people make behavior changes in their lives. It consists of the following five stages: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. In order to proceed from the first pre-contemplation stage, individuals and groups need some form of education and information, helping them better understand the purpose and need for altering their behavior. This is also true for a nation. For Russians to let go of their fear of economic failure, they need to be educated. By learning of the potential benefit from tobacco control and prevention programs, economic leaders will be more empowered to implement change in both the economic and health sector. Through using the Stages of Change model, we will be able to encourage prompt and effective change.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to produce evidence that tobacco prevention and a reduction of tobacco use will help Russia economically rather than harm it. Our focus contains two parts: first, to gather and evaluate questionnaire data from current smokers concerning where their money spent on tobacco would be directed if they stopped smoking; and second, to gather and evaluate data from those who have quit smoking to determine how they spend money previously used for smoking.

With this study, we can determine which sectors of the market place will most benefit. In a similar pilot study, the majority of money was spent on groceries and food. This illustrates that smoking cessation can improve nutrition and health, and even more significantly can benefit and not detract from economic status, as so many tobacco companies have argued would happen.

As cited earlier, research concerning the economic benefit of tobacco control has been performed in many countries, but there exists only limited data for Russia. This study intends to publish its findings in the *Journal of Tobacco Control* and the *European Journal of Health Promotion*, with the objective to encourage Russia's economists and leaders to increase tobacco control efforts.

Methods

By means of a Simple Random Sample (SRS), a piloted survey will gather information

concerning money spent by both current and past smokers. The following categories will be measured in the study in order to outline the overall economic effect of smoking cessation: home improvement, alcoholic beverages, dining out, health care, savings, hobbies, travel and recreation, transportation, arts and entertainment, rent and utilities, reading material, housekeeping products, clothing and groceries.

A college Fulton Grant will be sought to obtain finances to contract professional public opinion polling, enabling the use of the SRS data. If this is not received, an equivalent of census tracks will be used, sampling by apartments, floors, etc. The population targeted will consist of both males and females, 15 years and older, who are smoking or have quit smoking in Moscow, Tver, and Nizhni Novgorad.

The survey instrument will be distributed over a period of six weeks during May and June, 2008. Prior to testing, the study will obtain IRB approval and permission for the individuals participating in the research. We will be in continuous communication with Dr. Lindsay and his knowledge, experience and contacts will greatly enhance the project. He developed the survey. We will compile data findings and other scholarly works addressing tobacco control and economics. The resulting article will be reviewed and edited numerous times before publication.

Conclusion

Great need to reduce tobacco use obviously exists in Russia. Through our efforts, we hope to clearly identify the economic benefit of tobacco reduction. In doing so effectively, economic and government leaders will have more evidence-based reasons to increase tobacco control measures. In using our survey instrument, we hope those interviewed will progress in their individual stages of change. Additionally, we hope they will be an example to the consumer world that instead of economic harm, Russia will see improved nutrition, health and quality of life. We hope to convince producers to support these tobacco control efforts because of financial profit to them. As time goes on, with a healthier Russian workforce, greater economic benefit will also come to companies as less sick days are used and increased productivity continues. The Federation of Russia needs these financial advances. Data and information acquired will be shared with health departments and tobacco control organizations in the areas surveyed.

Anticipated Academic Outcome

Upon completion of the project, the resulting paper will be published in the Journal of Tobacco Control and in the European Journal of Health Promotion. In addition, we hope to present our findings at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting the following fall of 2008.

Qualifications

I am uniquely qualified to complete this project because my major in public health, taking Behavior Change, Planning and Evaluation, Public Speaking, Chronic Disease, and because of my international experience in Thailand, Guatemala, Australia, and other countries. Taking Dr. Lindsay's Substance Abuse and Addictive Behaviors helped me chose to work with him. Dr. Lindsay has served in numerous leadership positions, and is well-researched with an enormous list of publications, and has extensive tobacco

control experience in Ukraine and Russia.

Project Timetable

October 2007 - June 2008: Study in greater depth the economic situation facing Russia and

legislative measures for and against the tobacco industry. Work with professional public polling to coordinate effective survey distribution. Contact tobacco control and health organizations to coordinate effective research methods.

November 2007: Seek IRB approval.

May 2008: Travel to Russia.

First week: Work with a translator, the public polling organization, tobacco control and health

organizations to get the study underway. Pilot the survey in a much smaller area to ensure the study will be conducted properly.

Intermediate four weeks: Work with my translator, conducting the survey among the SRS

population.

Final week: Data analyzed and project reviewed by partner organizations. Write paper draft.

Return to the US mid-June.

Dr. Lindsay and I will review and edit the paper until it is ready for publication. During July and August, we will also prepare to present our findings in the American Public Health Association's annual meeting during the fall of 2008.

Fit with BYU's Mission

The study among Russian smokers and among those who have quit smoking will help enhance each of the areas in BYU's first Institutional Objective. As is the second objective of BYU, I desire to help contribute to a resolution of world problems, though I am well aware of the great effort any amount of change will require. By helping to improve the conditions in Russia, I also hope to extend the blessings of my education to members of the church in that region of the world.

Scholarly Sources

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