



Challenge And Project Overview

Smoking prevalence rate among the Armenian adult male population is one of the highest in the European region (63%). Smoking is also remarkable among Armenian physicians (48.5% M, 12.8% F) and medical students (50.0% M, 7.7% F).

Armenia was the first former Soviet Union country to accede to the WHO FCTC (November 2004), with following adoption of a national tobacco control law to ban smoking in healthcare, education, culture facilities and public transport. Armenia also banned tobacco advertising on TV and radio (2002) and on billboards (2006) and introduced larger (30%) health warnings on cigarette packs.

One area where Armenia's progress was less than satisfactory is the FCTC Article 14. To achieve reductions in smoking rates, it is critical to reach smokers with effective cessation interventions.

Inadequate training on tobacco dependence and its treatment is one of the major obstacles to getting consistent and effective treatment of tobacco dependence. Studies suggest that trained physicians are about twice as likely to offer assistance to their patients who smoke compared to non-trained physicians. Yet no such training courses and/or cessation clinics are available in Armenia. The goal of the project is to contribute to developing a national capacity in implementing the FCTC Article 14 in Armenia through:

- building smoking cessation training capacity on evidence-based methods and tools for teaching physicians the basic skills for working with smokers and supporting them to do so,
- training of primary healthcare physicians to provide them with knowledge and skills to provide brief advice and assistance to smokers.

Who

The American University of Armenia (AUA) School of Public Health (SPH) is affiliated with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and is a member of the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER). SHP has been involved in tobacco control research and advocacy projects through its Center for Health Services Research and Development (CHSR).

AUA SPH has a strong record of sustained linkages with the Ministry of Health (MoH), local and international agencies and NGOs.

The current project is conducted in cooperation with the Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) that provides graduate and postgraduate (including continuing medical education) education for medical students and practicing physicians.



Where and When

The project was implemented among primary healthcare physicians from two Armenian cities:

- Yerevan, the capital of Armenia,
- Gyumri, the second largest city (located in Shirak region).

Project timeline: 1 November, 2014 - 31 October, 2016

Results | Lessons Learned

- A new training program to provide an evidence-based training course on smoking cessation for practicing physicians has been developed
- Strengthened support from key stakeholders, including the policy and decision making community and the institutions of medical education to sustain the project outcomes and advocate for a system-wide change.

Comprehensive situation analysis

- Qualitative research
- Pharmaceutical Market Research
- White Paper: Mapping the FCTC Article 14 Implementation in Armenia

Built smoking cessation training capacity in Armenia

- Trained faculty members
- Developed and accredited curriculum

Evidence-based smoking cessation training program for health professionals

- Around 55 primary healthcare professionals participated in 2-day training

Next Steps

- Advocate for:
 - adoption of a system-wide screening for tobacco use and recording of the smoking
 - integration of the smoking cessation training into medical curricula;
- Develop and launch an online Smoking Cessation Training and Resource Center (a web portal)
- Monitor project indicators, analyze outcomes, produce reports and discuss the project activities through regular meetings with staff and partners
- Disseminate results of the project



Methods

Formative Research

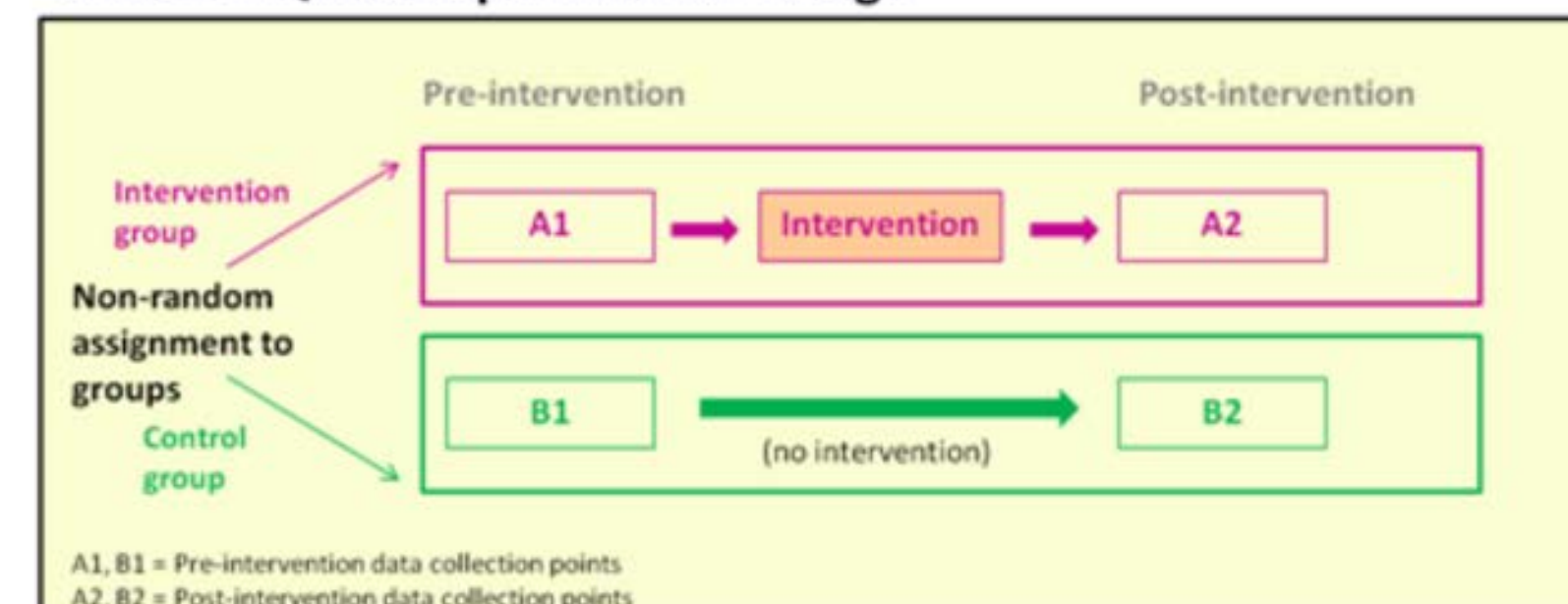
- Qualitative research
 - Semi-structured guide for moderating the FGDs developed by research team
 - 5 focus group discussions in Yerevan and Gyumri
- Pharmaceutical market research
- Desk review
- Cross-sectional survey in pharmacies
- Qualitative research among representatives of pharmaceutical companies
- Affordability of smoking cessation healthcare interventions

Project evaluation

- Quasi-Experimental design



Classical Quasi-Experimental Design



Formative Research

- Qualitative research to identify primary healthcare physicians' baseline knowledge, attitude and practices regarding smoking cessation, as well as to clarify their perceived needs for training and support for addressing tobacco use among their adult patients.
- Pharmaceutical market research to assess the current situation of the availability, affordability, and the price of tobacco cessation products in Armenia.

Trainings

- Training curriculum
 - didactic sessions on the smoking-caused disease and death; nicotine addiction and treatment; the role of healthcare providers in motivating patient to quit (5As);
 - interactive sessions (role play, case studies)
- Accreditation
 - accredited by the Ministry of Health and designated 5 CME credits.
- Participants
 - primary healthcare physicians from Yerevan and Gyumri (n=55)
 - control group will receive training materials after completing the post-intervention survey (n=55)

Evaluation

