Smoking Cessation Pharmacotherapy Products in Armenia

A. Harutyunyan1, MD, MPH, A. Abrahamyan1, MS, MPH, V. Petrosyan1, MS, PhD
1Center for Health Services Research and Development, American University of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia

BACKGROUND
Armenia was the first former Soviet country to join the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in 2005. One area where Armenia’s progress was less than satisfactory is the implementation of the FCTC Article 14. FCTC Article 14 states:
• “tobacco dependence treatment should be widely available, accessible and affordable, and should include education on the range of cessation options available”.

The Center for Health Services, Research and Development (CHSR), School of Public Health, American University of Armenia (AUA) conducted the study to assess the current situation with availability and affordability of tobacco cessation products in Armenia.

METHODS
The research included three main components: pharmaceutical market research and qualitative research among representatives of pharmaceutical companies.

1. Pharmaceutical market research
• Desk review
– to find information on the availability of smoking cessation products in Armenia
• Cross-sectional survey
– Yerevan was the survey area
– Structured questionnaire used
– 42 interviews completed (response rate 97.7%)

2. Qualitative research among representatives of pharmaceutical companies
– In-depth interviews
– Semi-structured interview guide

3. Comparison of affordability of smoking cessation healthcare interventions in Armenia

RESULTS

Results from pharmaceutical market research
The desk review on availability of smoking cessation products revealed that only Nicotine gum, Cytisine and Varenicline were registered in Armenia.

Table 1: Availability of smoking cessation products in pharmacies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>Name of the product</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any smoking cessation products in your pharmacy?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30 (71.43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only Nicotine gum</td>
<td>1 (2.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only Cytisine</td>
<td>27 (64.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only Varenicline</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cytisine and Nicotine Gum</td>
<td>2 (4.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12 (28.57%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from qualitative research among representatives of pharmaceutical companies
The representatives of pharmaceutical companies agreed that
– only limited number of smoking cessation products was available in the Armenian market
– low demand was the main explanation for limited availability of these products

Results from the affordability of smoking cessation healthcare interventions in Armenia
Cytisine was the most affordable among pharmacotherapy intervention.

CONCLUSIONS
• Only few recommended smoking cessation medications were registered and available in the market.
• Situation in the market was one of the major obstacles for consistent and effective tobacco dependence treatment in Armenia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
The project is funded by the grant, presented by Global Bridges Healthcare Alliance for Tobacco Dependence Treatment and Pfizer Independent Grants for Learning & Change.

Contact info: Arusya Harutyunyan, MD, MPH aharutyunyan@aua.am