

World Tobacco Quitting Day 2020 – the united voice of Polish experts on tobacco prevention and control

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On November 19th, 2020 we will celebrate annual World Tobacco Quitting Day. On this occasion, we would like call to action for a stronger and united tobacco prevention activities in Poland.

Despite many successes in tobacco prevention and control, use of tobacco products in Poland is still a great public health challenge. Whereas the prevalence of traditional cigarettes smoking is declining, new tobacco products are more and more popular – particularly among young people. It has been estimated that about 28% of boys and

18.6% of girls aged 13–15 years in Poland use e-cigarettes. Moreover, in the same age group 15.6% of boys and 14.9% of girls smoke traditional cigarettes [1]. Considering adult population, e-cigarettes are less popular – about 4% of men and about 1% of women use this particular tobacco product [2]. However, the use of traditional cigarettes is much higher – 26% and 17% of Polish men and women, respectively, are regular smokers [3].

Being aware of overwhelming influence of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic on health care systems, we cannot ignore impact

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of other pandemic, which lasts for decades and is evolving just in front of our eyes. Only between 2011 and 2014, e-cigarettes use among young Poles has increased from 6% to 29.9% [4]. Compared to other EU-countries, Poland has one of the highest rates of e-cigarettes use among teenagers [1]. Moreover, Poland is among a few European Union (EU) countries with a very high level (17.5% to <20%) of tobacco attributable Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) [5]. For comparison, Romania and Czech Republic are in the group of countries with DALY between 15% to <17.5%, Germany and Spain 12.5% to <15%, and France and Italy 10% to <12.5%.

Considering these data, we appeal to all involved parties – researchers, health professionals, and stakeholder and policymakers to advocate for a stronger and more tailored anti tobacco law, health education and stable long lasting financing of such actions. We believe that we need to stand together to stop, or at least to slow down tobacco epidemic in Poland.

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