

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, TOBACCO USE AND ITS CONTROL

SECTION IV. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, TOBACCO USE AND ITS CONTROL

A. OVERVIEW

Objective. Data summarized in *Healthy People 2010*¹ demonstrate that although urban air pollutant levels during the last two decades have been reduced, 45% of the US population reside in locations where health-based air quality standards for criteria pollutants such as ozone are exceeded on a regular basis. Studies^{2,3} have shown that 65% of nonsmokers are also at greater risk for diseases found to be associated with exposures to environmental tobacco smoke. These pollutants can cause or contribute to the development of a wide range of chronic respiratory diseases, including asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis, as well as contribute to cardiovascular disorders and the development of several cancers. Tobacco use has been identified as the single most important source of preventable morbidity and premature death in numerous US Surgeon General reports since 1964,⁴ including the 1997 report on *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People*⁵ and the most recent report on the health consequences of tobacco use.⁶ It is also a major health risk factor targeted for action in the *Healthy People 2010*¹ initiative.

Data collected during the 1990s demonstrated that adult smoking remained relatively constant in 24% of the US population,⁷ while smoking among adolescents rose to more than 35%.⁸ Reducing adult cigarette smoking and preventing adolescents from starting have been identified as effective ways to improve the health and longevity of the US population by reducing some 430,000 tobacco-related deaths each year and eliminating smoking-related health costs of over 50 billion dollars per year.^{9,10}

Over the past decade, studies have examined the prevalence of environmental and tobacco-related diseases among key populations at risk. However, prior to the first Arab-American health conference in 1999, few were directed towards examining these issues in the Arab-American community, which has a large number of first-generation immigrants. After that first conference, several community-based studies were initiated that brought together the staff experience of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) with the research expertise of both Wayne State University and the University of Michigan. Collaborative studies, funded by various sources including the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and the National Institute of Child

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Health and Human Development (NICHD), are ongoing. They are examining health issues relating to environmental exposures and to tobacco use and its control. The overall objective of this section of the conference was to establish sessions to:

—Demonstrate how collaborations between ACCESS and local universities are producing an effective model for community-based health research;

—Report on the current findings of potential adverse health effects associated with exposures to pollutants found in the ambient, workplace, and home environments of the Arab-American community; and to assess perceptions and beliefs as a basis for developing effective risk communication and management strategies; and

—Present results of ongoing studies that are assessing the prevalence of tobacco use in the Arab-American community as a basis for developing culturally sensitive and effective programs to reduce adult and adolescent smoking.

Background. Consistent with the objectives of the conference to provide both national and international perspectives, each of the two sessions included additional speakers. In the case of the environmental health session, Dr. Mark Wilson of the University of Michigan School of Public Health, in a talk entitled, "Globalization, Development, and Environmental Change: Impacts on Health," provided an overview of how aspects of human activities are adversely affecting the health of specific at-risk populations. Using a series of examples, he demonstrated some of the latest technology and approaches that are being utilized to address such health issues.

Dr. Ronald Davis, director of the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at the Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, in his talk entitled, "The Global March of the Marlboro Man," described the general worldwide trends in tobacco use by contrasting de-

veloped and developing countries. He illustrated marketing practices and explained some of the progress being made in international tobacco control under the auspices of the World Health Organization.

Underlying concepts and approaches being used in developing and operating the research projects were presented by Dr. Linda Weglicki of the Wayne State University (WSU) College of Nursing. In the following section, her talk is presented as a concept paper written with her colleagues, Dr. Virginia Hill Rice, also of the WSU College of Nursing, and Dr. Adnan Hammad, director of the ACCESS Community Health and Research Center.

The specific aims of a project entitled, "Environmental Impacts on Arab Americans in Metropolitan Detroit," being conducted by Dr. Adnan Hammad of ACCESS and Dr. Jerome Nriagu of the University of Michigan School of Public Health in collaboration with their respective colleagues, are summarized below. Their outline is followed by a series of conference abstracts and papers supported by the NIEHS funded project.

The background and specific aims of the "Arab-American Youth: Tobacco Use and Intervention" project is summarized by Dr. Virginia Hill Rice. It represents ongoing collaborations among colleagues at Wayne State University and Dr. Adnan Hammad and his staff at ACCESS. This introduction is followed by papers presented at the conference that were either related to or directly associated with this funded tobacco-control project. (*Ethn Dis.* 2005;15[suppl 1]:S1-33-S1-72)

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