

Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS)

Maldives 2019



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR

**World Health
Organization**

South-East Asia

Title: Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), Maldives 2019

ISBN: 978-92-9022-815-8

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Suggested citation. Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), Maldives 2019. New Delhi, India: World Health Organization, Regional Office for South-East Asia; [2020]. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) data. CIP data are available at <http://apps.who.int/iris>.

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Printed in India

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Foreword by H.E. Minister of Education, Maldives



Tobacco use is prevalent in Maldivian society and various surveys have indicated the prevalence rate. It is important for programming needs and for monitoring the effectiveness of the existing programmes that we have the latest data on the use and consumption of all kinds of tobacco products to inform the planning process.

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) is a school-based survey designed to enhance the capacity to monitor tobacco use among youth (13–15-year-olds) and to guide the implementation and evaluation of tobacco prevention and control programmes. This is the third such survey. Over the years GYTS has served as a valuable data source and baseline for the effective implementation of the School Health Programme that was established within the Ministry of Education in May 1986.

The Ministry of Education undertook the implementation of GYTS in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC), and the Ministry of Health and Health Protection Agency (HPA) of Maldives. We acknowledge the technical support provided by these agencies, and the financial support provided by WHO. We also thank everyone who contributed to the successful implementation of the survey, especially the WHO Country Office for Maldives.

The challenge now is to develop effective programming for tobacco use control; and this can only be achieved through coordination and collaboration of all stakeholders. Control of tobacco use can only be effective if we can target key behaviours prevalent within society as changing behaviours embedded within societal norms and attitudes can be extremely difficult.

We at the Ministry of Education are committed towards tobacco use prevention programmes as the health of our nation and building citizens who follow lifestyles that contribute to the health of the individual is of utmost importance if we are to have a healthy, productive workforce contributing actively and substantially to nation-building.

Thank you

Ms Aishath Ali

H.E. Minister of Education
Government of the Republic of Maldives, Malé

Message from the Regional Director



Tobacco use has a major impact on public health and sustainable social and economic development across the world as well as in the WHO South-East Asia Region. For most tobacco users, tobacco dependence begins during childhood or adolescence, which is why the implementation of evidence-informed prevention approaches that mitigate the susceptibility of youth is one of the most powerful ways to achieve the tobacco-free future to which we strive.

To implement such measures, which are aligned with Article 20 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, countries must establish institutionalized mechanisms aimed at robust surveillance of the prevalence, patterns and determinants of tobacco consumption among the youth. The Government of Maldives is to be commended for consistently monitoring the prevalence of tobacco use among youth by conducting Global Youth Tobacco Surveys (GYTS) in 2004, 2007, 2011, and now in 2019.

New tobacco products provide new challenges. To help address them, for the first time ever Maldives included the monitoring of electronic cigarette use among its youth in its 2019 survey, in addition to specific questions on the age of initiation of smokeless tobacco use, gudguda smoking, smokeless tobacco cessation and accessibility to smokeless tobacco products. Obtaining strong data on these and other areas of tobacco use among youth is crucial given the anecdotal evidence on the rising popularity of smokeless tobacco products, including arecanut, and gudguda smoking.

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