

Health literacy development for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases

Volume 1

Overview



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Foreword by the WHO Director-General



The burden caused by the epidemic of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health conditions and their modifiable risk factors on people, communities and economies is a major challenge to health, well-being and sustainable and equitable development. Governments need to address the urgency of investing in healthy populations and resilient health systems, with increased investments in prevention, screening, early diagnosis and appropriate treatment for NCDs. They must do so through inclusive, contextual and equity-driven strategies that are fit for local purposes and with a commitment to leaving no one behind.

A key enabler to accelerating progress towards the NCD targets in the Sustainable Development Goals is health literacy, to support people, communities and organizations to understand, recognize and take effective actions to protect and promote their own health.

This report provides practical recommendations for developing health literacy interventions to support countries to systematize the co-design of health literacy actions to enhance the impact of policies, programmes and services for the prevention and control of NCDs and mental health conditions, and their modifiable risk factors and determinants.

These recommendations draw from the findings of 16 case studies from low- to high-income countries, which have generated data supporting the development of locally owned and fit-for-purpose NCD strategies that are more likely to be embraced, implemented and sustained, especially among disadvantaged and poor communities.

The imperative is for rapid development and systematic implementation of country-relevant, context-specific solutions. The wide-scale implementation of the guidance contained in this report by World Health Organization (WHO) Member States will generate implementable and sustainable NCD health literacy development actions that respond to local contexts and demand. This will help to drive progress towards the WHO Triple Billion targets and improve health and well-being for current and future generations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'T' and 'A'.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

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The report was developed under the leadership of Svetlana Akselrod (Director, Global Noncommunicable Diseases Platform), Ruediger Krech (Director, Health Promotion) and Bente Mikkelsen (Director, Noncommunicable Diseases).

The development of the report was coordinated by Guy Fones, Unit Head, Global Coordination Mechanism on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, with the support, in order of contribution, of Richard H Osborne, Roy Batterham, Shandell Elmer, Melanie Hawkins, Christina Cheng and Ranjit Nadarajah from the Centre for Global Health and Equity, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia.

The GCM/NCD Working Group on Health Education and Health Literacy for Noncommunicable Diseases was co-chaired by Lixin Jiang (China) and Oxana Drapkina (Russian Federation). Members included Rosmond Adams (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Wagida A Anwar (Egypt), Kee-Seng Chia (Singapore), Lorie Donelle (Canada), Hla Mya Thway Einda (Myanmar), Norhayati Kassim (Brunei Darussalam), Abderrahmane Maaroufi (Morocco), Portia Mananfazira (Zimbabwe), Erika Placella (Switzerland), Ion Salaru (Republic of Moldova), Judith Segnon (Benin) and Pandup Tshering (Bhutan). Special advisors included Ishu Kataria (India), Ilona Kickbusch (Switzerland) and Don Nutbeam (Australia). The facilitator was Richard H Osborne (Australia). The WHO Secretariat included Faten Ben Abdelaziz (Unit Head, Enhanced Wellbeing, Health Promotion), Suvajee Good (WHO Regional Office

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