

IFMSA PROGRAM FOR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (HLNCD)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Background

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) represent a large and growing proportion of the global burden of disease, NCDs are made up of NCDs are largely preventable, and many are driven by four big risk factors, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets, tobacco use and a harmful use of alcohol. Not only are these risk factors interrelated, but they are all rooted in the social determinants of health, which are driven by the cultural, economic, and political factors. NCDs are a global problem, however, they disproportionately target the poor, affecting those who are already vulnerable.

While most medical students are aware of the biomedical basis of NCDs, many are unaware of the broader issues that impact NCDs, as well as their importance as a global health issue and tremendous public health burden. Medical students have the clinical knowledge to diagnose and treat NCDs, but few are conscious of the public health interventions that can mitigate these diseases. This is due, in part, to a lack of representation of disease prevention, public health interventions, and ways to strengthening of public health system, in the medical school curriculum. As future health care providers, medical students will be the ones educating their patients about healthy living and disease prevention in the future, and as it currently stands, few are well equipped to adequately deliver these messages. It necessary to train future doctors to be agents of change and advocates for healthy living conditions, and not just well trained clinicians. In addition, here lies the opportunity to empower students to advocate for, and implement, the policy decisions that are needed to tackle the growing burden of NCDs.

Although many countries have drafted action plans to fight NCDs, there is still plenty of room for improvement, especially with regards to program development and policy implementation. We believe that young people, and especially medical students, should be able to make valuable contributions to the creation of health policy in this area. In addition, in some countries, the public is unaware of the problems that can arise as a consequence of living an unhealthy lifestyle, nor are they aware of the importance of prevention and early diagnosis. Consequence which affect not only the healthy part of the population but are putting vulnerable populations to a even greater danger in developing NCDs. Vulnerable part of the population includes people whose abilities to get proper education or access to healthcare due to their low socioeconomic status is limited.

BENEFICIARIES AND TARGET GROUPS

- **Medical students** - first step in fighting NCDs and promoting healthy lifestyles is strengthening medical students as future doctors.
- **Medical schools** - as a tool for leading the change in healthcare system by training future healthcare professionals to be equipped to tackle the burden of diseases posed by NCDs
- **Vulnerable populations** – including, but not limited to, the elderly people of low socioeconomic status, people with disabilities, refugees and displaced persons, and those without access to education
- **Children and adolescents** - this population has the greatest potential for health promotion and investment in health of future generations
- **Governments, both local and national** - medical students need to advocate to governments regarding the national NCDs agenda. As medical students and young people, we have the knowledge to mandate a change in health policies to lead to a

LOGISTICAL FRAMEWORK OF INTERVENTIONS

End-goal and assumptions

The overarching goal of this program is to successfully reduce the burden of NCDs globally. In order to achieve this goal, there needs to be a broader understanding by the public of the lifestyle factors causing NCDs, and a change in lifestyle habits.

OBJECTIVES

- Create a system within IFMSA to educate medical students about NCDs as a public health issue
- Provide appropriate knowledge, tools and skills for medical students about NCDs and ways to educate their patients
- Promote healthy lifestyles by providing guidance about behavioral interventions for diet changes, physical activity and cessation of tobacco and alcohol abuse.
- Promote the application of early detection methods to detect people in early stages of NCDs
- Garner governmental and non-governmental support for affected communities in order to ensure access to healthy environments, quality of life, and treatment
- Countries implement effective risk factor reduction activities Advocate for the inclusion of health promotion and public health approaches to the global burden of NCDs in medical school curricula

Preconditions and backwards mapping

In order to reduce the burden posed by NCDs, there are two main preconditions that need to be focussed on. The first is that the general public, and particularly those populations who are particularly vulnerable, have the ability to live healthy lives due to the implementation of health promotion policies at a national level. Secondly, that there is equity in access to quality healthcare with regards to NCDs. To achieve the first precondition, people must be aware of importance of healthy lifestyles and accessible healthy environment. Healthy living and prevention of NCDs need to be ensured by the governments through positive and health promoting health policies that ensure healthy environment, access to healthy food, and promote reduction of risk factors that lead to NCDs. Campaigns that raise awareness and initiate advocacy efforts and policy changes are beneficial on global, national and local level and can be developed by medical students collaborating with policy makers, ensuring the sustainability and impact of these efforts. Healthy life education of population is essential to prevent development and/or to reduce health problems associated with NCDs while focusing on health promotion and health education.

To achieve equitable access to quality healthcare for people suffering from NCDs, medical students will advocate to their respective governments towards friendly and non judgmental healthcare system. Furthermore, advocacy efforts should be directed towards improvement of 'people suffering from NCDs' quality of life, their recovery and rehabilitation towards living full and healthy life. Only this will ensure the sustainability of the efforts leading towards full health of a person.

Milestone and indicators

- **Outcome 1:** Activities on NCDs prevention, screening and healthy lifestyles conducted by medical students for population at risk
 - **Indicator:** Number of activities and people reached
 - **Population:** Population at risk
 - **Threshold:** campaigns and events addressing prevention and health promotion activities
- **Outcome 2:** Medical schools curricula that addresses NCDs as public health issue
 - **Indicator:** Number of medical schools developing such curricula
 - **Population:** Medical schools
 - **Threshold:** Dialogue between NMO and respective medical school
- **Outcome 3:** Policies leading to health promotion and facilitation of healthy lifestyles, healthy environment and health food on regional, national, and international level, thanks to advocacy activities and liaisons with other healthcare organizations.
 - **Indicator:**
 - Number of meeting attended/ lesions formed
 - Number of policies on health promotion adopted by other organizations and by national and local governments
 - **Population:** Governments and NGOs

- **Threshold:** Participation of medical students and IFMSA in national government debates and decision-making bodies internationally and nationally.
- **Outcome 4:** Activities that will be directed to promotion and education of healthy habits and how to conduct them since early age that will be directed both in educating the parents and children
 - **Indicator:** Number of activities and people reached
 - **Population:** Children and parents
 - **Threshold:** Campaigns and events that will promote healthy habits and activities

Interventions

Education of medical students about NCDs and health promotion: Organizing workshops, seminars and congresses on health promotion and healthy lifestyles, prevention of NCDs, detection and screening, ways of appropriately approaching general population and general knowledge on policy making Creating materials and tools for education and trainings Activities on local national and international level

- Social media campaigns and awareness campaigns
- Local, national and international activities focusing on health promotion and promotion of healthy lifestyle
- Local, national and international activities on tackling NCDs in communities

Advocacy activities:

- Creating partnerships between IFMSA and international and national organizations that advocate for health promotion health policies
- Advocacy campaigns with local and national governments on NCDs towards comprehensive health policies that promote healthy life
- Medical student involvement in programs for prevention of NCDs
 - Community level activities with children as beneficiaries that will encourage and educate children on healthy lifestyles

Narrative

This program was developed from the need that medical students should join the fight against NCDs and actively work on reduction of this burden. NCDs, and unhealthy lifestyles as main NCDs risk factors, pose major strain on every nation's healthcare system, and take central part of their health programs. Often young people, medical students in particular, aren't as involved in shaping and implementation of this programs as they should be. This is a missed opportunity since medical students present a group that is already playing a major role in prevention and treatment of NCDs, and they should be educated about NCDs, and methods of their suppression, early in their medical curricula.

The objectives of this program are, first and foremost, in raising awareness in general population on importance of healthy lifestyles (and decreasing of main risk factors), early detection and treatment of NCDs since all of it would in the end produce healthy population with lowered risk of reducing NCDs. Also, medical students should be educated in public health problem that NCDs present and correct way to handle them. Moreover, they must be educated to successfully convey their knowledge, in an appropriate manner, to population without medical background. Lastly, advocacy efforts are to be addressed to the governmental programs and to include youth, especially medical students as indispensable part of those programs. NCDs, on a world scale present a challenge that a humanity as whole will have to face in the upcoming years, and the medical students are one of the major pieces of the puzzle in the solution that will move the world on a direction towards a world free of NCDs.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT AND NECESSARY RESOURCES TO LAUNCH THE PROGRAM

Internal strengthening In order to achieve some of the goals of this program, medical students need to be educated about health promotion and public health background and global burden of NCDs, as well as how this is to be tackled.

This is to be accomplished in few steps:

- Building knowledge of medical students on burden of diseases, with a focus on NCDs
 - Education of medical students on health promotion and population health
 - Creating trainings and knowledge platforms on information about health policies worldwide accessible for IFMSA members
 - Ensuring medical students have the knowledge how to best tackle the problem of health promotion and NCDs through advocacy and influence on health policies
- Building partnerships** The current work of IFMSA internally is focused on local and national activities that usually do not influence health and other related national policies. In order to strengthen our influence and build a brand, we need to ensure to
- Meaningful and collaborative communication with international organizations such are and not limited to: WHO, NCDs Alliance, FCA alliance, relevant professional medical associations and associations of medical professionals from relevant fields
 - Promote and lead the establishment the collaborative interprofessional platforms with other student organizations active in health and policy work
 - Meaningfully create active involvement opportunities for medical students worldwide to take the opportunities and engage in international and national policy making

ANNEX

Backwards mapping

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4mZbJa1UyHEOGJ2MTZzdk1qSEk/view?usp=sharing>