Session 2. How to be Part of the Change? - Harm Reduction and its Application

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Harm Reduction in Hong Kong

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Harm Reduction in Hong Kong
Harm Reduction Media Campaign: Drug Use

- Launched from May 2002 to October 2002 by the Special Preventive Programme, Department of Health, Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau and the Information Services Department of the Government, HK SAR.
- Objective: to introduce the concept of harm reduction to the general public and among drug users
- Media mix: television, radio, banners, advertisements in public vehicles, roving public exhibitions
Harm Reduction Hotline: Drug/AIDS

- Virtual Aids Concern Hong Kong
- Harm Reduction Hotline
- Accessible by general public
- 24-hour prerecorded messages on harm reduction in Cantonese, English and Putonghua
- Content:
  - What is harm reduction?
  - About methadone programme
  - Methadone clinics
  - About AIDS
Harm Reduction: Alcohol

- The Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374, Reg 39A): it is illegal for a person to drive or attempt to drive a motor vehicle, or be in possession of a motor vehicle, on any road with the proportion of alcohol in his breath, blood or urine exceeding the prescribed limit.
- With effect from 9 February 2009, uniformed police officers can require a person who is driving or attempting to drive a vehicle on a road to perform an alcohol breath test without the need for reasonable suspicion (Cap. 374, Reg 39B).
- Some NGOs such as the Hong Kong Automobile Association have started some designated driver services, which provide designated sober drivers to drive those who have consumed alcohol to return home.
Harm Reduction: Tobacco

- Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment Bill) 2019
- In June 2018, the Government proposed that electronic cigarettes and tobacco heat products should be regulated in a way similar to traditional cigarettes.
- On 10 October 2018 in her 2018 Policy Address, the Chief Executive drastically changed her position and unilaterally announced that the Government will introduce the Bill.
- The Bill is a blanket ban on e-cigarettes and THPs in Hong Kong
- The Council on Smoking and Health (COSH), (Hong Kong’s leading tobacco control advocacy organisation), has been campaigning to prohibit these safer alternatives to cigarettes.
Harm Reduction: Tobacco

• Lam TH et al. Electronic cigarette and new tobacco products to ban or to let free? (2018) 2018 Annual Scientific Meeting of the Federation of Medical Societies of Hong Kong: Medical Advances in Community Health, Hong Kong, 7 October 2018. In Program Book, p. 36-37

• Co-users?
• Valid scientific evidence?
• To switch? To quit?
• Effectiveness for quitting?
• Gateway in young people?
Harm Reduction: Tobacco

• According to Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health (COSH)
• ‘According to the Tobacco Control Policy-related Survey 2015 conducted by COSH, it was found that 85.4% of respondents had heard of e-cigarettes.
• About 0.7% of respondents had ever used e-cigarettes.
• The current use rate of e-cigarettes among young smokers aged 15-19 years (15.8%) was significantly higher than that of smokers aged 30 years or above.
• The main reasons for e-cigarettes were curiosity and fashionable, instead of aiding smoking cessation.
• The global sales of e-cigarettes surged exponentially by over 120-fold to a total of US$3.5 billion in 2015 from US$20 million in 2008.’