



EDİTÖRE MEKTUP / LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Revisiting public health strategies for better prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases

Bulaşıcı olmayan hastalıkların daha iyi önlenmesi ve kontrolü için halk sağlığı stratejilerinin gözden geçirilmesi

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To the Editor,

The epidemic of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) has become a problem of global magnitude affecting population from all segments of the community^{1,2}. Apart from the millions of people suffering from a gamut of NCDs and their associated complications, it is quite alarming that more than 70% of the global deaths has been attributed to NCDs alone¹. In addition, 36.8% of the reported deaths are premature (occurring before a person attains 70 years of age), of which 85% are being reported in developing nations¹. All these are shocking estimates and clearly suggest that we have failed to keep up pace with the ongoing epidemic and there are multiple gaps in the prevention and control of the disease^{1,2}.

Acknowledging the magnitude of the problem, there is an immense need to understand that we will be needing innovative ways and strengthening of the existing proven interventions, if we really aim to save millions of lives and improve the quality of life of the affected persons, including their mental health³. In view of the challenges faced by the policy makers and the health sectors, an Expert group has proposed a set of recommendations, namely supporting nations in their vision to empower the general population to take well-informed and healthy decisions for their lives³. However, this will in turn require enabling an environment which supports healthy life and intensification of the advocacy, communication and social mobilization activities about the diseases, the

associated complications and measures for prevention & control of the disease at the individual and health sector level²⁻⁴.

Considering the nature of the problem, it is of utmost priority that the policy makers and concerned stakeholders should be committed towards the containment of the problem, and there is no doubt that we will be needing a multi-sectoral response, including an active participation from the affected people^{4,5}. However, this all won't be possible without better financial support from the national Governments, and the program managers should realize that any investment in this regard will improve the health status of the people and indirectly play a crucial role in the financial growth of the nation, by not only reducing the cost incurred in maintenance of health and wellbeing, but also by increasing the number of health workforce^{2,3}. In the same regard, the nations should try for creating a trust for the collection of financial support from different international agencies, which will aid in adding support to the planned as well as existing services^{2,3}.

Moreover, the nations have to ensure that the services for prevention and management of NCDs should be included as one of the integral elements of the global vision of universal health coverage¹. This becomes very important because of the very fact no one should be subjected to catastrophic out-of-pocket health expenditures, which push them to below poverty line, and this in turn will require

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strengthening of the social protection services for the entire general population¹⁻³. Further, the Government should envisage involvement of the business sector in the health sector, as it will improve our response to the NCDs and associated complications²⁻⁴.

In conclusion, NCDs is a major public health concern and it is the need of the hour to mount an effective and innovative response for the containment of the problem. This will essentially require a more committed response from the national leaders and all the concerned stakeholders.

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