

HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION A Handbook for Teachers, Researchers, Health Professionals and Decision Makers	
Title	Say Yes to No-smoking: Case Study Croatia
Module: 5.6.2	ECTS: 0.25
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Key words	Anti-smoking campaign, smoking cessation, community intervention
Learning objectives	After completing this module students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase knowledge about anti-smoking campaigns as a method of decreasing the prevalence of smoking among population; • recognize and be aware of strengths and limitations of this kind of preventive measures; • be able to critically assess the effectiveness of this kind of preventive measures.
Abstract	Smoking is the main health risk factor that can be avoided, but remains the largest single cause of premature death in developed countries, accounting for almost 20% of all mortality. Smoking increases the risk of approximately 30 diseases, for some of them even by 10 to 30 times. There exist different measures/intervention programmes to tackle the problem of smoking, anti-smoking campaigns being one of them. Every year, 13,000-14,000 people in Croatia die from the consequences of smoking. Although the advantages of quitting smoking are well-known, large number of smokers find hard to give up smoking. As a response to this problem, in Croatia the campaign »Say Yes to No-smoking« was organized. As a part of this campaign, a first national »Smoke Out Day« was organized on March 2003 under the slogan »Croatia Breathes«.
Teaching methods	Teaching methods include introductory lecture, exercises, and interactive methods such as small group discussions.
Specific recommendations for teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work under teacher supervision/individual students' work proportion: 30%/70%; • facilities: a computer room; • equipment: computers (1 computer on 2-3 students), LCD projection equipment, internet connection, access to the bibliographic data-bases.
Assessment of students	Assessment is based on multiple choice questionnaire (MCQ).

SAY YES TO NO-SMOKING: CASE STUDY CROATIA

Marta Civljak

Theoretical background

Smoking is the main health risk factor that can be avoided, but remains the largest single cause of premature death in developed countries, accounting for almost 20% of all mortality (1). Smoking increases the risk of approximately 30 diseases, for some of them even by 10 to 30 times. Every year, 13,000-14,000 people in Croatia die from the consequences of smoking (2). Although the advantages of quitting smoking are well-known, large number of smokers find hard to give up smoking (3).

Preventing and quitting smoking are the two main strategies in the fight against smoking. The aim of preventive actions is to influence the beginners (children and adolescents) not to start smoking. Preventive measures include education, guidelines on how not to bow to pressure of the peers to start experimenting with cigarettes, banning adds, putting warning labels on tobacco products and advertisements, enforcing laws prohibiting tobacco sales to minors, and attempts to change the social norms and values (4-7).

Case study from Croatia – »Say yes to no-smoking«

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Croatia and the National Television have recognized smoking as a high-priority public health problem, and in March 2002 media campaign against smoking started by broadcasting anti-smoking spots donated by Australian Embassy. These advertisement spots were realistic, hard-hitting, and indelible. They were adapted for use in Massachusetts, Poland, Singapore, New Zealand, and many other countries (8, 9).

To accommodate those 80% of smokers who said they wanted to quit smoking but did not know how to do it, Andrija Stampar School of Public Health has opened the Centre for Prevention and Quitting Smoking (10). We used the experience from the media campaign run in Australia, and included the help line number in anti-smoking TV advertisements to help as many smokers as possible to break the habit and to cover as large a population of smokers as possible. Help phone that was free-of-charge has proved to be a potentially useful strategy in implementation of breaking the smoking habit project (11, 12). During the first year of operation of help line basic data on socio-demographic characteristics, smoking habits, and reasons for calling the Centre were collected during telephone conversations with smokers. The data were entered into previously prepared tables. Statistical analysis included 7,453 recorded telephone calls. Most of calls were received from persons aged 26-45 years (34%), followed by 19-24 (24%) and 45-60 (19%) age groups. There was no statistically significant difference in the number of calls between men and women (54% vs. 46%, respectively). Most callers consumed on average 20 cigarettes per day. The most frequent reason for calling was to get on how to stop smoking, whereas seeking information on professional literature was the least frequent reason for calling among our respondents. According to this analysis we concluded that telephone helpline is a useful and efficacious aid to anti-smoking campaigns (13). Due to the accessibility of the helpline and potentially wide coverage of interested users, it is a simple way to offer help to those who ant to quit smoking. But, evaluation of the helpline effects still presents a challenge.

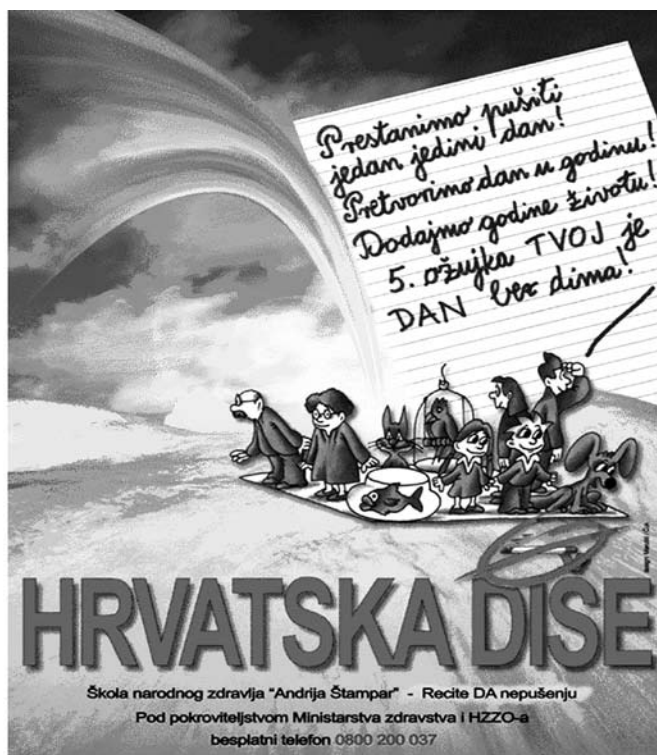
In addition to help line, the Centre has also opened the School of Non-Smoking, which is based on the application of psychotherapeutic-educative model of quitting smoking and has

been active in Croatia for more than 30 years. Although based on group-work, this model of quitting smoking is oriented toward each individual and covers a range of issues, from raising awareness of the motivation to give up smoking to determining the type of smoker, to analysis of previous unsuccessful attempts, to finding a new motivation. The advantages of giving up smoking are individually analyzed, the importance of positive thinking emphasized, and visualization of oneself as a non-smoker encouraged (14).

There was a need to create a network of Schools of non-smoking in order to accommodate smokers of other regions in Croatia who were interested for that kind of help in process of quitting smoking. Efforts to help smokers quit smoking are as worthy as preventive actions. A physician's advice increases smoking cessation rates by approximately 30% counselling can be administered personally, by telephone in pamphlets and booklets, audiotapes, videotapes, and computer programmes. Both individual counselling and group therapy increase the chances of quitting (15). Regarding to that, in April 2003, the course for family medicine doctors was organized in order to introduce the programme and advantages on involvement of family doctors in smoking cessation programmes. There were 220 participants, and 120 of them were recruited for further training which was organized at Andrija Stampar School of Public Health. 45 doctors signed an agreement that will provide service at their medical office and send a report to our School three months later. Only 35 of doctors send a report about their three month work. Analysis of those reports showed that in three months 1015 persons attended School of non-smoking, out of them 392 (38%) quit smoking, 358 (36%) smoked less then before attending the School and 265 (26%) continue to smoke equally.

The campaign has enlisted the support of Croatian sports Celebrities such as ski word champion Janica Kostelic, who supported our activities and took part on promoting healthy lifestyle This activities were recognized by World Health Organization, so they were awarded by World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) award. A year later the same award went to our well known Josko Marusic who was an author of ads used on media campaign (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Poster for the media campaign »Smoke Out Day« organized in 2003 under the slogan »Croatia Breathes«, designed by Josko Marusic.



The Centre has also established an interactive website for those who want to quit smoking (16). This highly visited website offers a large range of articles and all relevant information on detrimental effects of smoking and various types of help offered at the Centre for Addiction Prevention and Quitting Smoking, as well as weekly statistics of help line calls.

Furthermore, there have been many public actions organized, which were supported by public figures and involved a large number of Croatian citizens of all age groups. As part of the campaign »Say Yes to No-smoking«, a first national »Smoke Out Day« was organized on March 5, 2003 under the slogan »Croatia Breathes«. Organization was based on the experience of countries that traditionally carry out similar activities, by which, over a certain period of time, the number of smokers has been successfully reduced. The »Smoke Out Day« was organized on the first day of Lent and supported by 500 public figures, from the President of the Republic, to Prime Minister, to representatives of the government and religious community, to famous sportsmen, actors, and singers (17).

The aim of the first »Smoke Out Day« was to create a supporting environment for people who want to give up smoking and to highlight a number of sources of help available to them. Roman Catholics represent over 80% of the population of Croatia. By organizing the non-smoking day on the first day of Lent, when majority of people decides on what they will deprive themselves of, we expected to have created conditions for majority of smokers to

stop smoking for at least one day, hoping that this single day would turn into months or years. On the other hand, one of the aims of the action was the creation of religious, national, and political tolerance. Indeed, the »Smoke Out Day« was supported not only by the Croatian Archbishop, but also by the leaders of other religious communities in Croatia – mufti of the Islamic community, metropolis of the Serbian Orthodox Church; and leader of the Jewish community. After the »Smoke Out Day«, two surveys were carried out to evaluate the success of the action. First survey was carried out by an independent research agency, »Puls«. This survey was performed among a two-phase stratified, randomly selected representative sample of 600 Croatian citizens over 15 years of age, by using CATI system (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) and specifically prepared questionnaire. Analysis showed that 26% of smokers did not smoke a single cigarette for a whole day on March 5, 2003. Out of those who smoked at least one cigarette that day, 50% smoked less than usually whereas 62% of them seriously considered quitting smoking on permanent basis. When asked to assess the »Smoke Out Day« action on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 1 designating completely useless action, and 5 very useful action), over 80% of respondents assessed the action as useful. The results of this survey were immediately presented to the public to provide support to the smokers who abstained from smoking on the »Smoke Out Day« and help them remain non-smokers.

Concerning smoking behaviour, related attitudes to smoking, and the national »Smoke Out Day« on March 2003, the second survey was carried by the National Television's Market Research Department among a stratified, representative sample of randomly selected 2143 TV viewers and radio listeners aged 15 and over in their households. Over 85% of interviewed persons knew exact date of »Smoke Out Day«. Among smokers 27% of them had given up smoking on that day and 16% declared not to smoke during the Lent. Statistically, significantly more females (34%) than males (23%) abstained from smoking on the »Smoke Out Day« and more females (24% versus 10.8%) had decided to abstain from smoking during the Lent. Majority of abstainers were in the age group 30-44 years. The lowest response was from smokers with university education (18).

Later on we continued with activities prepared to target pupils from the first years of primary school. During the Croatian Children Week (October 6–12) we promoted of the no-smoking campaign called »My parents will say YES to no-smoking«. The campaign was organised with the Ministry of Education and Sports and the «Our Children» non-profit organisation

Due to our experience we can conclude that the most important thing for a change in behaviour is social support for the problem solution. Thanks to »Say Yes to No-smoking programme« we promoted the lifestyle change and created conditions for comprehensive Tobacco control Programme in Croatia (19).

Exercise

Task 1:

In bibliographic database (e.g. MEDLINE, PUBMED, etc.) find at least two scientific papers on any kind of anti-smoking campaigns.

Task 2:

Discuss critically strengths and limitations of this kind of preventive measures in reducing prevalence of smoking with other students.

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Recommended readings

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