

Action needed to help tobacco users quit across the globe

June 24 2013

More than half of the countries who signed the WHO 2005 Framework Convention on Tobacco Control have not formed plans to help tobacco users quit.

The [World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#) (WHO FCTC) is a treaty developed to tackle the global tobacco epidemic that is killing 5 million people each year. It came into force in 2005 and is legally binding in 175 countries. The FCTC requires each country to develop plans to help [tobacco users](#) in their population to stop—plans that should be based on strong scientific evidence for what works.

Two surveys of 121 countries just published in the scientific journal *Addiction* reveal that more than half of those countries have yet to develop these plans.

Just 53 of the 121 countries surveyed (44%) report having treatment guidelines: 75% of the high-income countries; 42% of upper-middle-income countries, 30% of lower-middle-income countries and only 11% of low-income countries.

Only one-fifth of the countries surveyed had a dedicated budget for treating [tobacco dependence](#).

Commenting on the findings, Professor Robert West, Editor-in-Chief of *Addiction*, said: "Tobacco dependence treatment is a very inexpensive

way of saving lives, much cheaper and more effective than many of the clinical services routinely provided by health systems worldwide. These reports map out for the first time the work that needs to be done to make this treatment accessible to those who could benefit from it. I hope they will be a spur to action."

More information: Piné-Abata H, McNeill A, Raw M, Bitton A, Rigotti N, and Murray R. A survey of tobacco dependence treatment guidelines in 121 countries. *Addiction*, 108: [doi: 10.1111/add.12158](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.12158)
Piné-Abata H, McNeill A, Murray R, Bitton A, Rigotti N, and Raw M. A survey of tobacco dependence treatment services in 121 countries. *Addiction*, 108: [doi: 10.1111/add.12172](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.12172)

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