

Bills Committee on Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill 2019

List of follow-up actions arising from the discussion

at the meeting on 2 December 2019

The Administration's response on the items raised by Members is set out as follows.

Prevalence of conventional cigarette use among adolescents in Japan

2. According to published data, the prevalence of current cigarette smoking among adults aged 20 and above in Japan in 2015 and 2017 was 18.2%¹ and 17.7%² respectively. The prevalence of current cigarette smoking among junior high school students in Japan in 2014 and 2017 was 0.9%³ and 0.6%⁴, respectively. There were no published data on cigarette use for the age group of 15-19.

3. Smoking prevalence has been declining globally due to the introduction of tobacco control measures in particular after the World Health Organization ("WHO") Framework Convention on Tobacco Control came into existence. There is also no evidence that the use of heat-not-burn ("HNB") products has contributed to decreasing smoking prevalence. Rather, the increasing rate of HNB use among Japanese adolescents aged 15 to 19⁵ shows that, similar to the case of conventional cigarettes, statutory prohibition of sale to minors will not be effective in preventing youth from getting hold of these tobacco products that are aggressively promoted by the tobacco industry.

Breakdown of population data of Korea published in August 2019

¹ World Health Organization. WHO report on global tobacco epidemic 2017. Available at https://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/2017/appendix-xi/en/

² World Health Organization. WHO report on global tobacco epidemic 2019. Available at https://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/en/

³ World Health Organization. WHO report on global tobacco epidemic 2017. Available at https://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/2017/appendix-xi/en/

⁴ World Health Organization. WHO report on global tobacco epidemic 2019. Available at https://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/en/

⁵ Tabuchi T, et al. Heat-not-burn tobacco product use in Japan: its prevalence, predictors and perceived symptoms from exposure to secondhand heat-not-burn tobacco aerosol. *Tobacco Control*. 2017;10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2017-053947

4. The Korean study quoted in paragraph 10 of LC Paper No. CB(2)283/19-20(02) shows that 2.8 % of Korean adolescents aged 12 to 18 had ever used HNB products.⁶ Among these users of HNB products, 75.5% and 90.7% were current and ever cigarette smokers respectively. In other words, the great majority of HNB users are using cigarettes. It is also of note that a significant portion of 9.3% HNB product users had never smoked a cigarette before, which signifies the risk of HNB product uptake by non-smokers.

5. Switching generally means a complete change from conventional cigarette use to use of HNB products. Another recently published study in Korea reveals that a great majority (over 96%) of HNB product users in Korea are dual users of HNB products and cigarettes.⁷ To date, all available population data on HNB product use show that the great majority of HNB product users dual-use rather than switch.

Smoking prevalence trend in Korea

6. In line with the global decreasing trend, smoking prevalence in Korea has declined significantly since 1990s, from 71.7% of male smoking prevalence in 1992 to 39.7% in 2016.⁸

7. According to the data published by the WHO, the prevalence of current cigarette smoking among adults (aged 19 and above) in Korea in 2013, 2015 and 2017 was 24.1%⁹, 22.6%¹⁰ and 21.1%¹¹ respectively. As for

⁶ Kang H, Cho S. Heated tobacco product use among Korean adolescents. *Tobacco Control* 2019;0:1–3. doi:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2019-054949.

⁷ Hwang JH, Ryu DH, Park S-W. Heated tobacco products: cigarette complements, not substitutes. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. 2019 Nov 1;204:107576. doi: 10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2019.107576. Epub 2019 Sep 21.

⁸ Chang Y, Kang HY, Lim D, Cho HJ, Khang YH. Long-term trends in smoking prevalence and its socioeconomic inequalities in Korea, 1992–2016. *International Journal for Equity in Health* 2019;18:148

⁹ World Health Organization. WHO report on global tobacco epidemic 2015. Available at https://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/2015/appendix_xi/en/

¹⁰ World Health Organization. WHO report on global tobacco epidemic 2017. Available at https://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/2017/appendix-xi/en/

electronic cigarettes (“e-cigarettes”), a published study reveals that the prevalence of current use of e-cigarettes from 2013 to 2016 among adult male in Korea increased from 2.2% to 4.3%, and among adult female increased from 0.3% to 0.4%.¹² Another recent study reported that in 2018, about 12.3% of male and 3.1% of female middle and high school students in Korea had ever used e-cigarettes.¹³

8. HNB products were introduced into the Korean market in 2017. The prevalence of current use of HNB products in adult population was 2.1%, according to a study conducted in 2018. Over 96% of current users are dual users of HNB products and cigarettes.¹⁴ Another study on adolescent use reveals that 2.8 % of adolescents aged 12 to 18 had ever used HNB products in 2018, of which 75.5% were current cigarette users.¹⁵

9. It is of note that HNB products are aggressively promoted as new smoking products with rapid uptake in population where HNB products were launched in the market.¹⁶ The rapid uptake of these new products and the pattern of dual use with conventional cigarettes have raised serious public health concerns. In view of the alarming data in Korea, we maintain the position that a full ban of alternative smoking products (including HNB products) as opposed to mere regulation will be necessary in achieving the aim of safeguarding public health through making it difficult for the public to get access to these harmful products.

¹¹ World Health Organization. WHO report on global tobacco epidemic 2019. Available at https://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/en/

¹² Chang Y, Cho S, Kim I, Khang YH. Socioeconomic Inequalities in e-Cigarette Use in Korea: Comparison with Inequalities in Conventional Cigarette Use Using Two National Surveys. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2019, 16, 4458.

¹³ Lee Y, Lee KS. Association of alcohol and drug use with use of electronic cigarettes and heat-not-burn tobacco products among Korean adolescents. *PloS one*. 2019;14(7).

¹⁴ Hwang JH, Ryu DH, Park S-W. Heated tobacco products: cigarette complements, not substitutes. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. 2019 Nov 1;204:107576. doi: 10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2019.107576. Epub 2019 Sep 21.

¹⁵ Kang H, Cho S. Heated tobacco product use among Korean adolescents. *Tobacco Control* 2019;0:1–3. doi:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2019-054949.

¹⁶ https://www.who.int/tobacco/publications/prod_regulation/https-marketing-monitoring/en/

Signatory campaign launched by the Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health

10. In July 2018, the Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health (“COSH”), in collaboration with various medical associations, tobacco control organisations, academia and non-government organisations, launched the “Support to enact a total ban on e-cigarettes and other new tobacco products” signatory campaign to gather public support for a total ban of these smoking products. According to COSH’s submission (LC Paper No. CB(2)1175/18-19(43)) to the Bills Committee on Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill 2019, over 75,000 signatures from citizens, companies and organisations were collected in the signatory campaign as at April 2019. On the other hand, the website of the signatory campaign shows that around 53,000 **online** signatures have been received. The 75,000 signatures cover written submissions collected through various activities held by COSH and supporting medical associations as well as through education campaigns in primary and second schools, that are not included in the figure of online signatures shown on the website.

Food and Health Bureau

Department of Health

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