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MEDIA RELEASE

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QUITTING SMOKING REDUCES RISK OF LUNG CANCER MORTALITY BY 70%

New study shows benefits of quitting and higher risk of lung cancer mortality among women smokers

Giving up smoking is highly effective in preventing death from lung cancer and can reduce the risk of dying from the disease by up to 70%. In addition, new research from the Asia-Pacific region confirms that cigarette smoking substantially increases the risk of dying from lung cancer in both Australia/New Zealand (ANZ) and Asia, and importantly highlights the continuing popularity of cigarette smoking across large parts of Asia, including China, where the harmful effects of smoking are still not widely appreciated.

In the study of 500,000 adults, published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, the Asia-Pacific Cohort Studies Collaboration (APCSC) shows that the risks of dying from lung cancer were about twenty times higher among women who smoke compared with male smokers, a worrying finding given the increasing trend for women to take up the habit in many countries.

The research paper's author, Dr Rachel Huxley, Director of Nutrition and Lifestyle at The George Institute for International Health (part of the APCSC Secretariat) said, "The importance of developing effective comprehensive tobacco control policies is highlighted by our research, which shows that if interventions only focus on prevention, then 160 million current smokers will die before 2050, with the vast majority of deaths occurring in China."

"Inadequate knowledge of both the harmful effects of cigarette smoking and of the benefits associated with quitting is likely to explain much of the continuing popularity of smoking among men in China, where there are an estimated 320 million smokers. There are huge numbers of lives to be saved through campaigns to alert current smokers to the dangers of their habit." Dr Huxley added.

“Effective action in Asia would help to head off a significant part of the projected one billion deaths from smoking that will otherwise occur around the world this century,” she said.

The APCSC is conducting the largest-ever study of cardiovascular and other non-communicable diseases in the Asian region. Project partners included many medical institutions across the Asia Pacific region.

The Collaboration’s primary goal is to provide direct, reliable evidence about the determinants of stroke, coronary heart disease, and other common causes of death in Asia-Pacific populations. It aims to produce region-, age- and sex-specific estimates of the cardiovascular disease risks associated with blood pressure, smoking, cholesterol, diabetes and other major risk factors.

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