

Improving Lives by Preventing Heart Disease and Stroke

The World Heart Federation is a non-governmental organization committed to helping the global population achieve a longer and better life through prevention and control of heart disease and stroke, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries.

The World Heart Federation comprises 189 medical societies and heart charities from more than 100 countries, as well as continental members covering the regions of Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe.

The World Heart Federation is recognized by the World Health Organization as its leading non-governmental partner in cardiovascular disease prevention and control.

The four pillars of activity of the World Heart Federation are: awareness building, advocacy, demonstration projects and sharing science/building capacity. Together with its members, the World Heart Federation raises awareness of heart disease and stroke, advocates for policy changes, develops projects to educate about reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and shares scientific and population health experience to build sustainable capabilities at the national and regional levels.

Awareness Building

The World Heart Federation develops activities to raise public awareness of heart disease and stroke. With its members and other partners, it encourages individuals and institutions to adopt heart-healthy habits and plays a major role in ensuring that governments implement broad policies for cardiovascular disease prevention.

World Heart Day is the most important awareness building event of the World Heart Federation. It promotes preventive measures to reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease worldwide. World Heart Day is actively celebrated in more than 100 countries and on all continents. This global event, which takes place on the last Sunday of September and focuses on a specific theme each year, involves a wide range of activities, including physical exercise sessions, lectures, shows, walking tours, healthy cooking competitions, public testing of cholesterol, blood pressure and glucose levels.



The **Go Red for Women** campaign raises awareness of heart disease and stroke as the number one killer of women worldwide. It encourages the medical profession to include heart disease and stroke prevention as a core part of women's health and urges women to recognize the risks and to reduce them by changing their lifestyles.

The **Colombia Model Youth Programme** seeks to address the epidemic of unhealthy diets, sedentary lifestyles and tobacco use among children and adolescents in Latin America through an educational partnership with Sesame Workshop and sponsorship of the Latin American component of the biennial Global Youth

Meeting on Health, which is designed to train young people to become advocates for their own health.



Advocacy

Tobacco is responsible for 5 million premature deaths per year. The World Heart Federation and its member organizations are intensively involved in advocacy on **tobacco control** and, notably, the ratification and implementation at the national level of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which has been signed by 168 countries, ratified by 131 of them and which entered into force in 2005. The World Heart Federation is also intensifying its focus on the current **overweight/obesity epidemic**. It is playing a lead role in campaigning for the need to protect public health against the hazards associated with inappropriate nutrition and physical inactivity. In partnership with the World Economic Forum, the World Heart Federation works for better health in the workplace. It recommends multilateral approaches, including full implementation of the WHO's Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and recognition of the need to make the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease one of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

Demonstration Projects

Targeted projects of the World Heart Federation are designed to develop sustainable capacity in national and regional member organizations, enabling them to carry out effective cardiovascular prevention and control activities targeted at both the population and the individual.



In **Grenada**, the World Heart Federation has created a model partnership with the Grenada Ministry of Health, local advisory groups and the University of Rochester to address the impending epidemic of cardiovascular disease. In Ekaterinburg, **Russia**, the World Heart Federation, in collaboration with its member organization, the Russian Society of Cardiology, is carrying out a pilot social marketing project, which aims to increase knowledge and awareness of cardiovascular disease, its risk factors and the link between a healthy lifestyle and a healthy heart.

In **Samoa and Fiji**, the World Heart Federation is implementing a secondary prevention programme to reduce the incidence of rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease among children. Ultimately, the training material will be available to be adapted and used in other developing countries, where rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart diseases are also major causes of premature death.



In **China**, the World Heart Federation is collaborating with the Chinese Society of Cardiology and Project Hope to prevent recurrences of heart disease.

Sharing Science/Building Capacity

World Congresses of Cardiology are held every two years during which thousands of cardiologists and other healthcare professionals from all over the world gather to share the latest science on the treatment of patients and the latest thinking in population-based prevention. The next will be held in Barcelona on 2-6 September 2006.

World Heart Federation **Scientific Councils**, composed of experts from around the world, carry out international training seminars, research and demonstration projects. One such seminar is the annual International Teaching Seminar on Cardiovascular Epidemiology and Prevention, which gathers participants from more than 20 countries to receive basic training in epidemiological research and its application to the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

Prevention and Control is a quarterly journal of the World Heart Federation, which focuses especially on cardiovascular disease prevention in low- and middle-income countries. **Nature Clinical Practice Cardiovascular Medicine** is a monthly publication of the World Heart Federation, which provides physicians with the latest science of patient care.

For more information please visit www.worldheart.org and www.worldheartday.com