

## **TOBACCO SMOKING AND CANCER**

In many countries cancer is the second most important cause of death. It is estimated that 80 to 90 percent of all cancer cases are related to environmental and lifestyle influences, hence researchers estimate that 80 to 90 percent of human cancers are preventable.

Though genetic factors and age affect cancer onset rates, the conclusion holds that many human cancers are avoidable. A great number of these are related to tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption, homosexuality and excessive exposure to solar radiation.

An estimated 6 million new cases of cancer occur annually worldwide, of which about a million are caused by tobacco smoking and chewing. Indeed, tobacco is the most important single factor in cancer causation generally, responsible for 30-40 percent of all cancers. No other single agent has been examined in more detail, nor more firmly established as a causal agent, than cigarette smoking.

The risk of cigarette smokers developing lung cancer increases with the number of cigarettes smoked, the duration of smoking, the time of onset and the type of smoking. Approximately one-sixth of those who smoke two packs of cigarettes per day will eventually develop lung cancer. The risk to those who smoke 40 cigarettes per day is 25 times more than non-smokers.

Cigarette smoking is also an important contributing factor in cancers of the bladder, kidney and pancreas. Association between gastric cancer and smoking has also been noted. Cigarette smoking has even been implicated in cancers affecting the breast, kidneys, liver, cervix, uteri and many other organs. It has also been implicated in childhood cancer as a result of prenatal exposure to parental smoking. Passive smoking was implicated in causing many cases of cancer.