Chapter 4
The Role of Social Marketing in Preventing the Spread of Non-Communicable Diseases:
Case of Tunisia

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ABSTRACT

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancers have become a major health concern for most countries around the world. Different elements such as social, biological, and environmental cause the NCDs. But the only way that one can intentionally modify to avoid these diseases is the desire to reduce risk factors for physical activity, tobacco, and diet. Several prevention strategies have been launched worldwide thorough governmental programs by implementing policies/laws. However, these programs don't integrate active communicate participation and support with the social community. This chapter aims to bring out the priority of enhancing the level of public awareness of NCDs. To ensure public responsiveness, the focus of this research is to create an effective solution to prevent risky behavior. The authors focus on the construction of "Sahtek," a social media solution developed on the fundamentals of social marketing, to better coach and promote awareness of NCDs prevention.

INTRODUCTION

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) is a real burden to health systems in all regions of the world, and mainly in low and middle-income countries. It represents one of the most pressing challenges facing the world today. The total number of deaths attributed to the NCDs is projected to rise over the coming decade in case of absent significant interventions (World economic forum, 2011). The NCDs, known as the invisible epidemic, poses unique governance challenges: the causes are multifactorial, the affected populations diffuse, and effective responses require sustained multi-sectorial cooperation. Scientific evidence shows that unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, the lack of knowledge and the negative attitudes of the public enhance negative risk factors of NCDs. To avoid more expensive treatment, innovative global governance for health is urgently needed to engage civil society and individuals in the global response to the NCD crisis. Preventive strategy is fundamental to tackle the onset of disease, it occurs under health education, environmental measures and social policy. The ultimate goal is to bring about a change in behaviour or factors affecting community or individuals so that diseases will be prevented from developing. Although national responses are crucially important, community and personal initiatives are badly needed. As global health governance mechanisms aren't be able to rein in the rise in NCDs, several studies suggest that principles and techniques of social marketing may help to enhance the global awareness of NCDs. Effectively tackling NCDs and their key risk factors requires a detailed understanding of the current status and progress at Tunisia level. Feasible and cost effective interventions must be implemented to reduce the burden and impact of NCDs now and in the future.

This chapter will review growing complexity in global governance for NCDs. In the absence, as yet, of a universal standard to advance multi-sectorial global health governance, the chapter will explore whether current governance mechanisms in Tunisia are capable of addressing the determinants of NCDs. This work emphasizes integrated prevention by targeting the two main risk factors: unhealthy diet and physical inactivity. In this process, the chapter proposes to find ways to increase public awareness of NCDs and support NCD prevention and control efforts by using social media solution. Social networks proposed initiatives for the global governance of NCDs, and the challenges and opportunities confronting health actors in their efforts to implement healthy lifestyle to all. For this, the specific objectives of the chapter are first to propose a social media solution with effective preventive and control policy on diet, physical activity and health, second to promote the adoption of more healthful behaviour and finally to promote the multi-stakeholder engagement.

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