

DAILY NEWS

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Smoking remains a critical health hazard

IT has come to light that cigarette smokers incur a collective cost of 118.8 million US dollars. This is, apparently, wonderful news to the tax collector and is even better news for the business fraternity. But it is, certainly, awful news for the medical doctor.

It was reported in yesterday's edition of the 'Sunday News' that cigarette tax revenues amounting to approximately 54 million US dollars is by far less than what is actually spent on fighting smoking-induced cardiovascular diseases alone each year.

A recent survey has established that most of the cardiovascular disease patients are elderly men aged above 40 years. The main reason here is that cigarette smoking health complications usually crop up after 20 years of active tobacco abuse.

Medical costs for cardiovascular diseases are normally high because patient recovery is, invariably, painfully slow. So, health care costs usually escalate with the spectre of death for the elderly patient looming – a sorry spectacle, indeed.

It is imperative to mention that infections emanating from tobacco smoking are a critical health hazard. Medical doctors say that health complications, especially respiratory impairments, take many lives in this country.

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death, killing more than five million people worldwide each year. Scientific evidence also confirms that smokers face a very high risk of death from many cancers, respiratory diseases, stroke and many other fatal infections.

Tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals in the form of particles and gases. Out of this number, about sixty of such chemicals cause or are suspected to cause a variety of cancers.

It would be remiss on our part not to point out here that tobacco smoking cuts back on life expectancy with health complications that include erectile dysfunction and critical lung complications causing mayhem. In fact smoking wrecks the entire body.

Smokers sometimes pass problems to non-smokers around them through what is known as passive smoking. In the same vein, parents who smoke near infants unwittingly put the child's health at risk.

Even a spouse who smokes endangers his or her non-smoking partner. Most smokers are dare-devil characters who often puff in buses, hospitals, libraries, restaurants, bars, banks and government offices, sometimes in front of signs that prohibit the habit.

But smoking in public or crowded places is restricted by law and is punishable. Anyone infringing the law is liable to a fine not exceeding 500,000/- or a jail term not exceeding three years or both fine and jail term. So, smokers must kick this diabolical habit, or else ...