

FROM THE DESK OF THE GROUP EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Dr KK Aggarwal
Group Editor-in-Chief, IJCP Group

IJCP Group and Harm Reduction

Dear Colleague,

Founded in 1990, **IJCP Group is an independent medical communications group** that caters to health awareness, need for policy changes and evidence-based scientific updated information to the health care providers through its publications, journals, books, health information products, online CMEs, advocacy meets, conferences, discussions and consensus statements.

Our purpose and core philosophy has always been to spread medical knowledge to the general public and the medical profession. In order to do this, we work in partnerships with various experts, including industry to bring forward pertinent information that may be helpful to raise public awareness on preventive health and medical advancements.

Our first flagship journal called “The Indian Journal of Clinical Practice” was launched to provide clinicians with evidence-based updated information about a diverse range of common medical topics, including those frequently encountered by Indian physicians. We aim to help our medical practitioners with balanced information to make informed decisions.

Since then, we have grown into a group with various offerings from specialty publications and books (print and online) to consulting, branding and professional medical-related think tank events. IJCP prides itself in its network of various print and online editors who have been or are currently associated with IJCP’s growing

publications. Some eminent doctors who provide editorial support and contribute to our publications are (not an exhaustive list): Dr Alka Kriplani, Dr Anoop Misra, Dr Rajiv Khosla, Dr Ajay Kumar and Dr Swati Y Bhave. Additionally, we have over 146 contributors who write or provide editorial support to the Group regularly.

With such a wide network of professional medical experts and opinion leaders in their respective fields, IJCP has been effectively enlisting the support of its member contributors towards fulfilling its objectives.

HARM REDUCTION

Of late, IJCP Group, in association with many experts, has been working on the concept of harm reduction.

Harm reduction is multifaceted. It is a public health strategy, which aims to mitigate the dangers or harms associated with a behavior or condition with a goal of cessation of the said behavior. It was first developed and applied to substance abuse disorders as **an alternative to abstinence-only focused interventions for adults**, who were unwilling to accept abstinence to avoid negative consequence of substance abuse.

However, over the years, it has found various other applications including, but not limited to, sexual health education to reduce HIV infection, effective weight management, reducing risks related to tobacco consumption.

In order for us to achieve our mission of advancing public awareness, IJCP Group works with various stakeholders including the industry, Heart Care Foundation of India and Perfect Health Mela in bringing balanced information approach. This network partnership approach helps us bring forth the message of harm reduction and prevention on various issues to a wider audience. We then bring the message to the public by using a multipronged approach.

- We **engage key stakeholders** at different levels of medical fraternity and government to build consensus on pursuing harm reduction as a pan-India public health strategy.
- We **curate conversation** with leading public health practitioners through social and traditional media.
- We run **public health media campaigns** on benefits of harm reduction strategy.
- We are planning to **publish a textbook on Harm Reduction** featuring contributory articles from various public health experts. We are publishing this book because we see the importance of putting together the most prominent voices who champion harm reduction across various public health issues in India.

WHY IS IJCP GROUP FOCUSING ALSO ON TOBACCO HARM REDUCTION?

Apart from IJCP Group's focus on harm reduction across its various public health issues, we also believe that tobacco smoking and tobacco-related diseases and deaths in India are a growing public health concern. It is the #1 cause of preventable death in India and causes 13.5 lakh people to die every year from tobacco or tobacco-related diseases.

Disclaimer: My association with IJCP Group has nothing to do with my assignments with Indian Medical Association (IMA), Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania (CMAAO), Medical Council of India (MCI) or Delhi Medical Council (DMC) with whom I have been associated under many positions.



Therefore, IJCP has recently taken up a campaign on "Tobacco Harm Reduction" **with a clear-cut policy that we support the total ban or complete cessation of use of tobacco products. Till that goal is achieved, tobacco should be medically replaced by safer nicotine-based non-tobacco products.**

An IJCP expert committee reported that tobacco harm reduction differs from harm reduction as it applies to other issues. While in the case of alcohol, sugar, salt or substance abuse, the harm minimization will be to reduce the dose, the same is not true for tobacco. Reducing tobacco consumption may not reduce the mortality and morbidity and hence the answer lies in replacement or substitution with safer harm minimization-based products including DCGI approved nicotine lozenges and patches and the yet unapproved electronic nicotine delivery products.

In fact, a more recent study published in January 2019 in the New England Journal of Medicine also found that Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) are nearly twice as effective as conventional nicotine replacement products like patches and gum, for quitting.

Given its mission, IJCP Group is also working, among others, with Juul Labs for compiling and advocating scientific evidence-based literature that addresses issues such as vaping vs. smoking; vaping vs. other nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) and health effects of vaping.

We, as IJCP Group, will continue with our evidence-based literature research on the subject of Harm Reduction in general and tobacco harm reduction in particular and encourage further research by others on the subject as we believe it has the potential to reduce the burden of tobacco-related chronic diseases in India, particularly lung cancer.