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*Detailed Discussion on the Agenda of
the 55th WHO Assembly Meeting*

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Contents

1. What are the major risks to health in your country and how confident are you about their magnitude? / 1
2. Are monitoring and surveillance systems adequate to ascertain whether exposure levels are increasing, and in which population subgroups? / 2
3. What are the impediments to implementing population- wide interventions for major risks in order to lower exposure levels for the entire population? / 3
4. What government institutions need to be strengthened in order more effectively to reduce major health risks in your country? / 4
5. What measures might be taken to increase resources for prevention? / 6
6. What strategies are there to manage highly uncertain risks in your country? / 7
7. How can the communication of risks be made more effective in your country? Is there a role for closer collaboration with the media? / 8

Detailed Discussion on Agenda

1. What are the major risks to health in your country and how confident are you about their magnitude?

☐ Status

- With aging population increased, chronic degenerative diseases(lung cancer, cardiovascular diseases, liver diseases)and accidents, are major causes of death among Koreans.
- The risk factors that may cause the chronic degenerative diseases to Koreans are comprised of smoking, heavy drinking of alcoholic beverages, lack of exercise, unbalanced nutrition and diet(bulimia and anorexia). Obesity resulted from lack of exercise and hypernutrition, and stress are risks to chronic diseases, too.
- To quantify the burden of risks to health among Koreans, National Statistical Office conducts yearly nationwide survey of causes of Death, and Social Statistics Survey. The Ministry of Health and Welfare conducts National Health and Nutrition Examination survey every three years, and it shows that the health risk factors have risen over the past ten years.
 - A survey of life styles that may cause risks to health among adult Koreans showed that 67.8% of male adults were smokers, and 82.9% of male adults were

alcohol drinkers in 1999. In addition, about 32.6% of male highschool students were smoking cigarettes in 1999.

- Lifestyle(or health practices) varied by gender and age, and it was found that low socioeconomic status and low education could be indicators of risky lifestyles.

☐ **Problems**

- Survey of prevalence of lifestyle related risk factors in addition to smoking, alcohol use, exercise is limited. This limits quantifying measures to find out the magnitude of risks to health.

☐ **Improvement Measures**

- More lifestyle variables should be added to the nationwide survey instruments.

2. Are monitoring and surveillance systems adequate to ascertain whether exposure levels are increasing, and in which population subgroups?

☐ **Status**

- The Ministry of Health and Welfare nationwide National Health and Nutrition Examination survey every three years, mental health epidemiological survey, and oral health survey.
- The commission on youth protection surveys prevalence of use of cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs among youth.

- In accordance with the National Health Promotion Act and Regional Public Health Act, Cities and provinces, and districts monitors local health status and conducts survey of smoking and drinking patterns on local population.

☐ Problems

- We need to develop health programs that incorporates risk reduction intervention according to the degree of exposure to risk factors, individual characteristics such as youth, females, adults, elderly, and environmental differences such as urban and rural. There are, however, limited survey systems to subdivide the target population and high risk groups.

☐ Improvement Measures

- We must develop survey systems focused on health risk factors on subpopulation.
- National survey results and data on health examination and use of health service covered by the National Health Insurance system should be fully utilized. This may lead to effective national health risk Monitoring System.

3. What are the impediments to implementing population– wide interventions for major risks in order to lower exposure levels for the entire population?

☐ Status

- Parts of the National health promotion funds, operated in

accordance with Health Promotion Act enacted in 1995, go to public health centers in connection with reducing major risk factors by stopping smoking and drinking, exercise, nutrition and stress management.

- The government supports non-governmental campaign activities at local level.

☐ Problems

- Lack of data on evidence, cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness in relation with health risk factor reduction efforts impedes provision of governmental budget.
 - Lacking research on evidence, cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness in relation with health risk factor reduction programs
- It takes long to measure the impact and outcome of health practice programs such as smoking cessation and weight management program because lifestyle change takes time and much efforts.

☐ Improvement Measures

- Must expand projects and programs aimed at reducing confirmed health risk factors and support research on unconfirmed risk factors.
- The government will strongly supports healthy lifestyle activities at local level.

4. What government institutions need to be strengthened in order more effectively to reduce major health risks in your country?

☐ Status

- To reduce risk factors to health the Ministry of Health and Welfare and its cooperating institutions strengthen their efforts and cooperate with the commission on youth protection to prevent health risks to the youth.
- Ministry of Health and Welfare steps up education and publicity efforts to reduce chronic disease occurrences and morbidity rates, establish systems aimed at early examination and treatment of major chronic regenerative disorders, and provide free medical service to vulnerable groups of population.
- By the 2010, Ministry of Health and Welfare is providing health promotion and disease prevention services over life stages in accordance with its long-term health promotion strategies.
 - Infants and toddlers, children, youth, adults, and elderly will receive appropriate services.
 - The government will establish a sound base for disease prevention and health potential improvement through lifestyle change, disease prevention, health promotion
- Local public health centers strengthen their health promotion roles(a total of 242 public health centers in cities and regions).

☐ Problems

- Local public health centers have not provided enough services to vulnerable groups, but their health promotion programs and efforts will be activated with increased support from the National Health Promotion Fund.

☐ Improvement Measures

- The government must support planning and budget to reduce national health risk factors, and launch pan-national healthy life practice campaigns.
- We must distinguish the roles by public and civilian sectors and link them together, and heighten service access to highly risky and vulnerable groups in our communities.
- Especially direct services from local public health centers will be increased.

5. What measures might be taken to increase resources for prevention?

☐ Status

- Currently, the National Health Promotion Fund is drawn mainly from cigarette taxes(\$0.11 per pack of cigarettes, and an amount to 440 million a year) and the government is increasing preventive and health promotion services.
- By the National Health Promotion Act, cigarette advertising, promotion and sales, smoking in public places, and alcoholic beverage advertising are limited in Korea.
- The government strengthens national smoking cessation programs and provide educational materials on chronic diseases and cancer.

☐ Improvement Measures

- Establishing appropriate local network directed by the local public health centers
 - Local public health planning and local health promotion planning will focus on health promotion and disease prevention.
- Allocation of health promotion budgets will be differentiated by the results of evaluation of local health promotion programs and efforts.
- We must have in place human resources training courses and qualification certification systems to allow communities to do projects aimed at reducing risk factors by the means of stopping smoking, moderate drinking, weight management, and stress management.
- To secure and increase the National Health Promotion fund, health promotion taxation will be drawn from alcoholic beverages in addition to cigarettes.

6. What strategies are there to manage highly uncertain risks in your country?

☐ Status

- Management of unproven risks to health is very limited currently in Korea. However, the government increases its support to manage proven risks of cancer and cardiovascular diseases.
- Management of chronic diseases is focusing on preventive

measures such as educational activities, and establishing appropriate system for early detection of diseases and treatment.

- To prevent and manage cancer, the government has established basic database on cancer prevalence and use of medical services, supported cancer research and provided early detection of cancer programs.
 - In addition to the early detection of cancer programs, cancer patient registration programs have been put into practice in 8 metropolitan areas in Korea.

☐ **Problems**

- Cost-effective analysis of risk factors and its management are limited.

☐ **Improvement Measures**

- The government must gradually increase long-term research tasks to research management of unproven risk factors to health.

7. How can the communication of risks be made more effective in your country? Is there a role for closer collaboration with the media?

☐ **Status**

- Governmental Broadcasting system, GBS, is conducting yearly smoking cessation campaign to effectively communicate the risk of smoking and the risk of getting cancer.

- The Ministry of Health and Welfare has developed an advertisement to prevent youth smoking.
- To facilitate the access to information on health risk factor reduction through the public media and to increase journalists' attention on health promotion, Ministry of Health and Welfare features "This Month's Health Guidelines" through the media and internet "healthguide".
 - Local health centers use local media to communicate health risks to health.

☐ Problems

- Plenty of health risk information is rushing through diverse media including the Internet. Certain informations are not verified.

☐ Improvement Measures

- Strengthen relation to media and publicity
- Step up efforts to provide customized information to highly risky and vulnerable classes, and secure increased access to people through linking with public and civil service.
- Health information monitoring programs will increase public awareness on the choice of right health information.