

Letter to Editor

Neo communicable disease rather than ‘non’ communicable disease for the acronym “NCD”

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It is with interest and pleasure that I see notices of meetings and symposia, and articles, devoted to the theme Noncommunicable disease. I still live in the economic and geographical ‘South’ but the concern arises from the continued use of terminology that dulls the senses to the urgency of the problems involved. Since I wrote the letter (reference at end) the epidemic of the so called ‘non’ communicable disease has increased greatly; obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancers, accidental trauma, road deaths etc, and there is still less research and action about breaking the methods of spread than there is about the illnesses.

I have since and before 2002 argued all over about the danger of calling these non- communicable and argued that we should use the word neo-communicable instead to give a greater sense of urgency. ‘Non’ induces a feeling of inertia!

I have also long argued that now there are even more new vectors conveying pathogenic influences to the mind and body and turning them into illness and disease by attitudinal and/or behavioral changes without the need for animal or insect vectors! These are the electronic (radio and television, the internet in various ways) and print media, social media, advertising and peer pressure across nations. There are now more subtle and sophisticated methods of using communication with high-pressure presentation and advertising techniques to force compliant behavior by readers, whether the ordinary public, children, or potential consumers, without consideration of risk. As indicated earlier in this note there is now acceptance of the dangers of the so-called noncommunicable diseases and the effect of lifestyle on them (and others such as diabetes, most malignancies, accidental and non-accidental trauma, and the consequences of family breakup).

The concern I have is that the urgency that needs to pervade this subject is still not there. It took nearly 60 years for the dangers of Tobacco use in smoking to be adequately recognized and ACTED UPON. I think the name ‘NON-’ dulls us.

More Information

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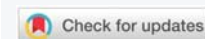
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I suggest and plead that now the words ‘noncommunicable’ are consigned to history or a very small bit of the present, and that the name NEOCOMMUNICABLE is used for the bulk of the conditions under consideration This does not even involve a change in the acronym (NCD can be used though NeoCD would be better) - but will subconsciously instil a sense of urgency. I hope that this letter may instigate debate on this matter inside and outside nonmedical general and advertising, and medical circles and schools and anywhere else that may help force the issue.

I am sending this note to you to publish/publicize the idea I hope because of all the various people that still ask me for notes or articles- your potential to reach people of all kinds by many methods seems the greatest! Please consider using your reach to change people’s thinking.

References

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