

International Network of Women Against Tobacco

Advisory Board

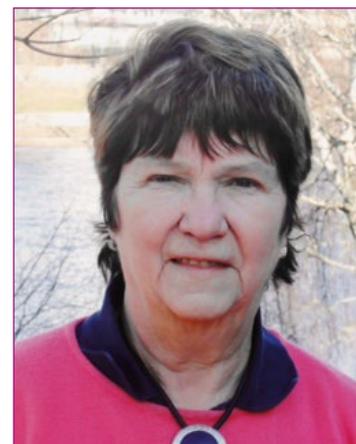
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Editorial

It is my great pleasure to be the editor of the 2nd Inwat Europe Newsletter. This issue focuses on women's leadership in tobacco control, and we have some fascinating articles for you. One article is an evaluation in 34 European countries. It clearly shows that we still have a long way to go, both to improve women's leadership in tobacco control but also to get countries to implement article 4.2.d of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which recommends introducing gender sensitivity in all areas of tobacco control. The evaluation has a very striking conclusion – so far, none of the 34 European countries studied has implemented this article.

WHO Europe has worked with INWAT Europe to promote a gender-sensitive approach in tobacco control by producing reports on gender and tobacco. One such report is the 2015 report Empower Women, Facing the Challenge of Women and Tobacco in Europe. But even though this report shows that there are some inspiring projects targeting women and girls, the great majority of projects still only focus on women during pregnancy. It is now high time for the parties to decide on whether to introduce guidelines for article 4.2.d in line with their guidelines for implementing other important articles of the FCTC.

Both women and men will also need recognition for their hard work, e.g. via official awards recognizing tobacco control champions. However, according to one article in this newsletter, women need much more recognition as awardees of tobacco control awards. In a comparison of the sex-distribution of WHO tobacco control awardees by different WHO regions, only the European Region has an acceptable gender balance. Other regions still have a long way to go. Although the WHO regions can do much better, the greatest imbalance was found in the sex distribution of Luther Terry Awardees: In Europe, twice as many men as women have received the Luther Terry Award. I doubt that European men are twice as good as European women in fighting tobacco. Welcome to the barricades!



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Women, tobacco and women's leadership in tobacco control. An evaluation of 34 European countries

The threat from tobacco to the health of girls and women in Europe is grave. More women smoke in the European Region than in any other WHO region, and, in some countries, it is increasing. For many years, we have known how tobacco companies use cynical marketing techniques to target women, but little has been done. However, the FCTC requires parties to implement the gender perspective when making and implementing all tobacco control policies.

To determine the priority of action on women and tobacco in Europe, including women's leadership in tobacco control, an evaluation of 34 European countries was conducted. The evaluation also looked at the implementation of Article 4.2.d of the WHO FCTC, which underlines "the need to take measures to address gender-specific risks when developing tobacco control strategies".

The method used was an email survey sent to tobacco control advocates, civil servants and NGO representatives with predetermined contacts in the 34 countries.

Four questions were asked: what priority the issue of women and tobacco had in a country, whether that country had implemented Article 4.2.d, women's level of participation in leadership positions

within governments and NGOs, and the involvement of women's interest organizations in tobacco control.

The main conclusions were:

- Few said that women and tobacco was a priority issue in their country. If it was an issue, the focus was mainly on pregnant women and smoking.
- None of the 34 countries had implemented the WHO FCTC article on gender sensitivity in all areas of tobacco control. (Article 4.2.d of the FCTC) Most respondents stressed that they needed guidance on how to respond to this article.
- There were some positive signs, but this is not good enough. We need more female government officials in leadership positions than in NGOs.
- Women's organizations outside the health sector had little involvement in tobacco control or women and tobacco issues.
- European countries now need to urgently renew their efforts to implement the gender-sensitive policies endorsed in the WHO FCTC article 4.2.d. Also, as stated in the preamble, women's leadership in tobacco control must be strengthened and women's organizations encouraged to participate in tobacco control activities.

Preamble of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC):

"...the need for full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation and the need for gender-specific tobacco control strategies"

**Are men twice as good as women as tobacco control advocates?
The sex-distribution of international tobacco control awards**

In Europe, the WHO gave 47 individual tobacco control awards between 2004-2014 to 29 men and 18 women. Since 2008, there have been an equal number of male and female awardees. At the same time, other regions are very gender imbalanced and have honored at least twice as many men as women. Despite Margret Chan's passion for empowering women, not even the DG's special award has a gender balance among recipients: since 2008, 3 times more men than women have received it.

The sex-distribution of the most prestigious tobacco control award, the Luther Terry Award, is even worse. Of 25 individual awardees, only 8 are women. In Europe, there are 3 women awardees out of 9 in total. The most gender-balanced region is the Western Pacific Region, and the worst are the American and African regions, with no women at all as awardees.

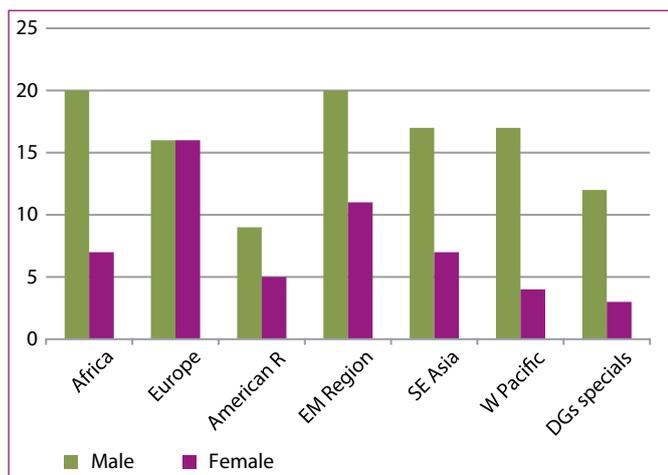


Figure: WHO Award: Female and male individual awardees in the different WHO Regions 2008-2014. Source: WHO/HQ

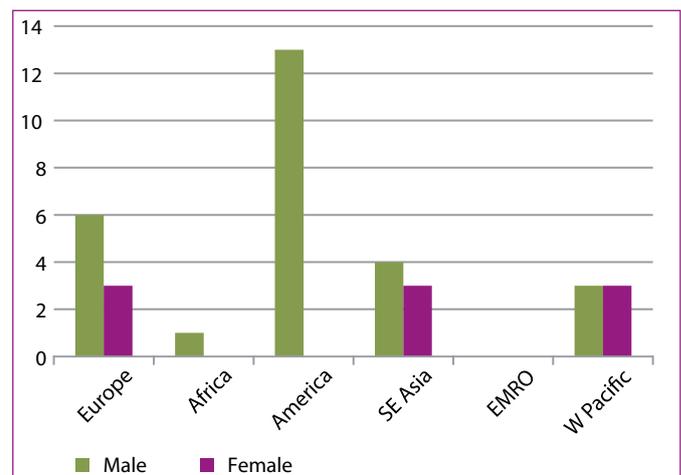


Figure: Luther Terry Awards: Female and male individual awardees in the different WHO Regions, 2000-2015. Source: American Cancer Society

A great loss for INWAT Europe; Alison Hillhouse and Patti White have passed away

INWAT Europe is extremely saddened to share the news that two of the world's finest minds in the fight for women and against tobacco – Alison Hillhouse and Patti White – have both recently passed away. The passing of Alison and Patti is a shock to all of us friends in INWAT Europe but also in the global tobacco control networks. Both Alison and Patti were founding members of INWAT Europe and were very instrumental in bringing the issue of women and tobacco onto the European agenda.

Alison and Patti will be truly missed by their friends and colleagues, but while we are all saddened by this profound loss, Alison and Patti's passion and determination live on in each of us as we fight against the tobacco industry's attempts to seduce women with their deadly products. Let's honor Alison and Patti by redoubling our efforts in their names.

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