

# Four sections of global health issues health essay

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Today the health of millions people is threatened by a number of preventable diseases. Obesity, smoking, alcohol addiction and illegal drug taking are the most common killers. National expenditures on treating illnesses which are caused by these addictions or illnesses are increasing every year. Statistics shows that millions people die from illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, cancers and overweight problems. ASH factsheet (smoking statistics, October 2011), has estimated that 81, 400 deaths in the UK in 2009 were caused by tobacco-related illnesses. Moreover, WHO (2011) stated that the annual death toll linked to alcohol is approximately 2.5million. According to World Drug Report (2012) illicit drugs are used by 270 million people and 1 of 100 (people) die from using the illegal drugs. Obesity has become a significant problem because of changing diets and lifestyles and cheaper processed foods. In many countries the easy availability and cost of alcohol is causing serious medical and social problems. Lifestyle diseases are an increasing problem in the 21st century. This essay will discuss the problems outlined above and suggest how they can be alleviated. The first one of the main four issues is smoking. The tobacco industry can be identified as being the cause of the biggest world-wide epidemic ever. Statistics shows that number of people who are killed by smoking-related illnesses is more than from illegal drugs, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined. Also, it was estimated by World Health Organization and ASH Factsheet (Tobacco and the developing world) that smoking is responsible for more than 5 million people who will die this year and about one million will be in China. Researchers believe that this number will increase to 7 million deaths in 2020 and to more than 8 million deaths in 2030 annually (ASH Factsheet Smoking statistics, October 2011). Many

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diseases as lung cancer, asthma, pneumonia, other cancers and heart diseases are caused by smoking. National expenditures on health care system are huge. For example, expense on treating tobacco-related illnesses costs the U. K. from approximately 2. 7 billion pounds to 5. 2 billion pounds. Egypt in 2003 spent about 545. 5 million dollars on smoking related treatments (ASH, (Tobacco and the developing world, August 2009). Cigarette smoke is very dangerous for people who do not smoke and experts call it passive smoking or second-hand smoking. Passive smoking takes about 600, 000 lives every year, and 64 percent are women (WHO and Human Diseases and Conditions, N. D) In addition, about 3, 000 nonsmokers are killed due to second-hand smoke in the USA annually. Moreover, approximately 300, 000 of children are in danger of contracting problems with lungs and lower airways. Actually, all organs are influenced by the smoke, especially brain and heart which leads to diseases as asthma, heart diseases and cancers. If passive smoking depends on tobacco goods, the main issue is how tobacco business can be stopped. The "mpower" of World Health Organization provided some ways which could change the statistics of deaths and countries expenditures on treating tobacco-related illnesses e. g. providing people with information about the dangers of smoking and second-hand smoke, banning advertising and investment, and increasing taxes and prices on cigarettes. According to ASH (Tobacco and the developing world, 2009), differences in tobacco use between developing and developed countries can be clearly seen in statistics where from 1. 3 billion smokers today 82% are in developing countries. Researchers have estimated that a significant decrease in intake in developed countries as Canada, Australia, Britain and the USA was about 2 decades ago, when approximately in the <https://assignbuster.com/four-sections-of-global-health-issues-health-essay/>

middle of 20th century (1960th) the tobacco production has doubled.

Moreover, experts suppose that developing nations will have 71 percent of world's tobacco production in 2010, and 80 percent of this percentage is expected to be in China. The increase in smoking was after Second World War when the USA started a new program when low and middle-income countries were supplied with tobacco and the main target was China with its large market and where from worlds 3 cigarettes one was smoked there.

Currently, China has 350 million smokers and it is 36 per cent of Chinese population (ASH (tobacco in the developing world, August 2009)Many

experts believe that this increase depends on many factors. Thus, according to Connolly (2012) the tobacco use in the developing world can be reduced and the tobacco industry controlled if governments have a strong judicial system, a free press and are prepared to tackle corruption. As well as

smoking, alcohol is the second complex issue. Alcohol abuse is one of the most serious health risks worldwide, as it can not only have an impact on individual health, but also can ruin families or societies in several ways.

Firstly, according to WHO (2011a), people who are alcohol abusers are more likely to suffer from diseases such as cardiovascular and gastrointestinal diseases. As a causal factor in more than 60 major types of diseases and injuries, the annual death toll linked to alcohol is approximately 2.5 million.

Also, alcohol can impact on families and society. For example, people who are addicted to alcohol often lose their ability to work, and as a result, the family loses income and society loses productive people. Moreover, when people gain diseases caused by alcohol, there is an increasing health care expenditure, which may lead to more economic pressures. Furthermore,

alcohol abuse is one of the potential causes of family conflicts and also an

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obstacle to social harmony by contributing to acts of violence. It has been reported by Room (2002), that at least 16, 800 people were hurt in accidents and violence, such as street fights and car crashes, caused by alcohol abusers in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil each year. To solve problems of alcohol abuse it is important to study the reasons why people become addicted to alcohol. Some researchers think that alcohol abuse can be regarded as a medical condition, and, although the exact cause of alcohol abuse is unclear, there are several possible factors. Firstly, as a physical cause, alcohol abuse is a neurological disease, which means that people who often drink too much can become dependent on alcohol. According to Drug-Addiction-Support (2012), one of the reasons why people over drink are that some people want to feel free from sadness, pressure or anxiety, and as a result alcohol abuse usually develops over time. This kind of person may finally be addicted to alcohol. Another factor is social and family impact, especially for adolescents, who are easily influenced by adult behavior. For example, if both parents drink, their children are more likely to drink. Data from the Associated Press in the USA (2009) shows that 81% of high school students have consumed alcohol, compared with 70% who have smoked cigarettes and 47% who have taken drugs. It shows that alcohol use is becoming a widespread and serious problem which should cause alarm and attention especially for its effects on adolescents and young people. Although there is no way to thoroughly solve alcohol problems, there are still steps that can be done to reduce the impact of alcohol and to improve prevention. The Institute of Alcohol Studies (2010) claimed that in order to cut down the level of alcohol consumption, supply and demand should be examined. The supply can be reduced by limiting the production, strictly regulating distribution and <https://assignbuster.com/four-sections-of-global-health-issues-health-essay/>

sales. To reduce demand, education and government programs are needed. People should be more aware of the potential risks of alcohol, and to use alcohol in a more healthy way. Government can improve the prevention programs by banning advertising, raising taxes, and encouraging alternatives to alcohol. Alcohol linked problems are becoming global health issues. Alcohol abusers are vulnerable to medical and social problems caused by alcohol. Moreover, the consequences can be felt through individuals to families and then the whole society. However, the conditions to improve the situation depend on both individuals and government. Also, drug taking is one of the problems that the modern world is facing. It has become prevalent worldwide, both in developed and developing countries. It can destroy bodies both physically and psychologically and can devastate communities. It is very difficult for people to extricate themselves from the grip of drugs once they start taking them. As a serious public health issue, drug abuse has serious consequences in almost every community in some way. In China, heroin use has risen from ten cases to 52 thousands in the past ten years. According to the research of NIH (National Institutes of Health), each year drug abuse results in around 40 million serious illnesses or injuries among people in the United States. Research into drug abuse has continued for many years. It shows that the average life of drug users is 10 to 15 years shorter than non-drug users. Drug abuse can be considered as a global health issue as a result of two main factors, physical and psychological harm. Drugs as a kind of chemical product can induce delusions and paranoia. If drug abuse continues addicts may suffer from heart disease, respiratory illnesses and the wasting of muscle tissue even died in 10 to 20 years. In addition, some drug addicts use the same needles

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to inject drugs and this exposes them to the risk of HIV. Moreover, drug abuse can also damage the nervous system. Drugs cause people become addicted so that some people choose suicide to finish their psychological pressure. To avoid these tragedies, people have to find some way out. Treatment and prevention are necessary. On the one hand, public prevention programs should be extended. Governments should emphasize not only the danger of drug taking, but also how to stay away from drugs. At the same time, it is also necessary to educate people when they are young. On the other hand, choosing appropriate treatments is very significant. Most treatments focus on how to help the patients avoid drugs and maintaining emotional calm. Government agencies or nongovernmental organisations can organise patients go to drug counselling and group meetings which also help them avoid the people, places, and problem situations. Society should not only help them learn coping strategies taking an example anger management and job skills so that they can have more choices in life, but also give them support and respect. Drug abuse as a dangerous global health issue should be focused on. It damages people both in body and mind. The negative effects it brings impact not only on individuals and the public. Governments need to invest more time and expenditure for programs of prevention and treatment. At the same time, with the improvement of the quality of life, obesity has become one of the main causes of global health issues. Obesity increases the risk of many physical and mental conditions. Furthermore, the number of obese people is increasing every year. According to " Earth Trends: Nutrition: Calorie supply per capita", the average calories available per person per day which means the amount of food bought increased in all parts of the world from the early 1970s to the <https://assignbuster.com/four-sections-of-global-health-issues-health-essay/>

late 1990s except Eastern Europe. The United States had the highest incidence with 3,654 calories per person in 1996. Figure one shows the trends in the prevalence of obesity among adults aged 20 and over by sex, from 1999 to 2010 in the United State. Moreover, the same situation is emerging in the all over the world. Figure one Although obesity related illnesses are exerting a tremendous influence on human health, the causes of obesity are still various and open to debate. The fundamental cause of obesity and overweight problems is an energy imbalance between calories consumed and calories expended. Globally, there has been an increased intake of energy-dense foods that are high in fat, salt and sugars but low in vitamins, minerals and other micronutrients. In addition, there has been a decrease in physical activity due to the increasingly sedentary nature of many forms of work, changing modes of transportation, and increasing urbanization. A limited number of cases of obesity are due primarily to diet and sedentary lifestyle. Rosenheck (2008) stated that at an individual level a combination of excessive food energy intake and a lack of physical activities are thought to explain most cases of obesity. In addition, the association between fast-food consumption and obesity becomes more apparent because societies have become increasingly reliant on fast-food meals and energy-dense foods. Given the health risks of obesity and its high prevalence has become urgent to take action to prevent it. The main treatment for obesity consists of dieting, physical exercise and medication. First of all, diet programs may produce weight loss over the short term, but maintaining this weight loss often requires making exercise and a lower food energy diet a permanent part of a person's lifestyle, which many people find difficult to manage. For instance, individuals are supposed to increase consumption of

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fruit and vegetables, as well as legumes, whole grains and nuts. At the same time, individuals should limit the intake of sugars. Secondly, a more active lifestyle which expends more calories is essential. The energy expenditure above that required for activities of daily living such as bicycling, playing basketball, walking for exercise and swimming. Thirdly, with the development of medical technology, many medications designed to help weight loss have been produced. According to Rucker et al, one medication, Xenical, is current widely available and approved for long term use. Weight loss however is modest with an average of 2.9 kg (6.4 lb) at 1 to 4 years and there is slight information on how these drugs affect longer-term complications of obesity. Smoking, alcohol, drugs taking and obesity, as four major global health issues, are causing a great number of deaths every year. All these four problems are similarly associated with high speed development in the modern world in both developed and developing countries, which promote unhealthy lifestyles and stressful lives. These four issues affect not only the individual, but also the public. On the one hand, they can damage individuals both physically and psychologically, on the other hand, these effects can impact on individuals to families and the whole society. On the basis of this serious situation, to improve the prevention programs and more efficient treatments, individuals should be more aware of the risks and change their lifestyles accordingly. Governments should extend education programs both in school and public and provide more sources both human and financial to pay more attention to the patients by improving medical care systems. In addition, stronger laws need to be implemented. Although these problems are complex and cannot be solved

completely, positive measures can gradually reduce the negative effects, and turn the situation into a virtuous circle.