Incorporating sustainability aspects into our work at the Icelandic Cancer Society

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Diet and premature mortality

Noncommunicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, respiratory diseases and cancer account for 80% of deaths in the European region (WHO, 2018)

“Unhealthy diets are the **largest** global burden of disease and pose a greater risk to morbidity and mortality than does unsafe sex, alcohol, drug, and tobacco use combined”

*GBD 2017 Diet collaborators*
Situation in Iceland – premature mortality

• Premature mortality – death before the age of 75 years that could have been avoided by better lifestyle or better treatment
• In Iceland around **100 individuals decease per 100,000** inhabitants before the age of 75 because of cancer
  • Leading cause of premature deaths is due to cancer diagnosis
• Two important risk factor for cancer in Iceland
  • Frequency of daily smoking has gone down to 9% (from 40% in 1985) among 15 years and older
  • Prevalence of adult obesity has more than triplet since 1990 (8% to 27%)
• Online survey in the spring 2019 among a nationally sampled group of Icelanders (18+) revealed that there is a need for more education on the importance of cancer prevention through dietary habits
This publication has reached quite a lot of discussion in Iceland and we feel that people want to make changes for the sake of the environment because more premature deaths can be avoided.

Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems


Executive summary

Food systems have the potential to nurture human health and support environmental sustainability; however, they are currently threatening both. Providing a growing global population with healthy diets from sustainable food systems is an immediate challenge. Although global food production of calories has kept pace with population growth, more than 820 million people have insufficient food and many more consume low-quality diets that cause we found with a high level of certainty that global adoption of the reference dietary pattern would provide major health benefits, including a large reduction in total mortality.

The Commission integrates, with quantification of universal healthy diets, global scientific targets for sustainable food systems, and aims to provide scientific boundaries to reduce environmental degradation caused by food production at all scales. Scientific targets for the safe operating space of food systems were established for
A new online champagne to educate on lifestyle that is also sustainable
- There is no simple solution found in food supplements or medicine
- Based on European Code Against Cancer

4 out of 10 cancer cases can be prevented through lifestyle.

- Avoid smoke and tobacco
- Be physically active every day
- Avoid alcohol
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Have a healthy diet
- Protect the skin

Leaflet inside the box
Different kinds of approaches are needed to reduce premature mortality

Here is an example on how frequency of daily smoking has reduced in Iceland

**Prevention strategies that worked!**
- No advertising
- No visibility in shops
- Warning text on the packaging
- Assistance offered to those who wanted to quit smoke
We need action plan – such as:

• Taxing unhealthy food products
• Providing economic incentives for the production of healthy and sustainable food items
• Regulating food marketing
• Promoting healthy school and work environments taking the environmental part into consideration
• Funding educational campaigns
• Thanks!