

# *Tobacco Use Kills at Least 36 People a Day in Cuba*

---



Havana, June 1 (RHC) -- Tobacco addiction is the non-genetic illness that most negatively affects Cubans' quality of life, and each day an average of 36 people die from diseases caused by tobacco use, according to local experts.

In Cuba, more than 13,000 deaths attributed to tobacco use occur each year, with two people per hour dying from smoking-related causes and another two dying every 12 hours from the effects of second-hand smoke, according to Dr. Patricia Varona. She went on to say: "Smoking is a personal decision. However, it's important for people who have this damaging vice to be aware that their decision also affects the health of people who don't do it."

The specialist with the National Institute of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology said that Cuba is the country in the Americas where children are most heavily exposed to second-hand smoke in the home.

A nationwide survey of the risk factors in smoking prepared by the Public Health

Ministry found that 24 percent of Cubans age 15 and over "actively" smoke, and more than 50 percent are exposed to second-hand smoke, whether it be at home, at work or in public places.

The survey found that 16 percent of Cuban women and 21 percent of Cuban men smoke. Given the situation, and on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day on May 31st, Cuban health authorities are insisting that tobacco use is a preventable cause of death and warn that it exacts a price on society due to illness, disability and psychological damage as well as being an economic burden on individuals and families.



**Radio Habana Cuba**