

# Review of: "[Commentary] The WHO strategies to reduce tobacco-related deaths are insufficient"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

The article on strategies to reduce tobacco-related deaths was read with interest and is especially relevant in the current context of measures taken to reduce impact of pandemic of tobacco use. Few points however deserve to be highlighted:

- a. Harmful effects of tobacco, particularly smoking, were understood after many decades of its use. In that context use of smokeless tobacco and snus would also need to be studied over a long time to identify its effect on body systems.
- b. The components of snus such as nicotine and nitrosamines need to be evaluated in detail being toxic compounds with likely carcinogenic features of latter.
- c. World-over and especially in some low-income and middle-income countries the chewing of tobacco and sublabial administration of tobacco products is prevalent. Many such countries have reported increased rates of cancers of oral cavity including buccal cavity, gums and palate and pre-cancerous lesions besides effects of tobacco smoking. Therefore, impact of snus in this regard needs to be understood.
- d. WHO exercises an overall caution in advising reduction of all forms of use of tobacco products including snus. So, while it is prudent to identify safer alternatives to tobacco which is smoked, and considering that punitive measures and legal actions do not necessarily work in all circumstances, harm-reduction techniques should be explored by countries participating in COP 10 with empirical data-supported examples.