

## Real Talk - Hookahs & Health

A critique of the WHO TobReg's "Advisory Note" report entitled: "Waterpipe tobacco smoking: health effects, research needs and recommended actions by regulators"<sup>1</sup>

While hookahs are most popularly known as a source of entertainment and a social centerpiece, they are also a serious part of many people's culture and way of life. Of late there have been several debates and controversy regarding the health benefits and/or hazards of hookah smoking. Tobacco consultant Kamal Chaouachi recently addressed the World Health Organizations (WHO) advisory report with his own critique. While Inside Hookah does not support, or disagree with either Mr. Chaouachi's or the WHO's position, we thought it would be interesting to make this information available for our readers. Below there is an abstract of the 9 page pdf document to provide a sample of the article's content. If you would like to read the article in its full context, you may do so by clicking the following link: [A Critique of the WHO TobReg's "Advisory Note" in Full Context!](#)

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**Abstract** Background and aim The World Health Organisation Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation (TobReg) has issued in 2005 an "Advisory Note" entitled: "Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking: Health Effects, Research Needs and Recommended Actions by Regulators". "Waterpipe" smoking is now considered a global public health threat and the corresponding artefact is actually known in the world under three main terms: hookah, narghile and shisha. This important report, the first ever prepared by WHO on the subject, poses two major problems. On one hand, its bibliographical references dismiss world chief relevant studies. On the other, it contains a certain number of errors of many orders: biomedical, sociological, anthropological and historical. The purpose of the present study is to highlight, one by one, where these weaknesses and errors lie and show how this official report can be considerably improved.

### Results

We realize that widely advertised early anthropological studies were not taken into consideration whereas they shed a substantial light on this peculiar form of smoking and help understanding its high complexity. As for concrete errors to be found in this report, they deal with the chemistry of smoke, health-related effects, smoking patterns, description and history of the artifact and its use, gender and underage use aspects, prevention and research needs in this field.

### Conclusion

The scientific credibility of an international expert report may be at stake if its recommendations do not rely on sound objective research findings and a comprehensive review of the existing literature. The critical comments in this study will certainly help improve the present WHO report.

Kamal Chaouachi - Researcher in Socio-Anthropology and Tobaccology, Consultant in Tobacco Control

1.This article is a partial replication from a pre-existing and published article: A Critique of the WHO's TobReg "Advisory Note" entitled: "Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking: Health Effects, Research Needs and Recommended Actions by Regulators". Journal of Negative Results in Biomedicine 2006; 5:17.