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WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION STATEMENT

on

NOISE POLLUTION

Adopted by the 44th World Medical Assembly
Marbella, Spain, September 1992

Preamble

The WMA Statement on Pollution adopted in Sao Paulo in 1976 and revised in Singapore in 1984 refers to noise pollution in one sentence only: "Excessive sound levels produced by industrial sources, transportation systems, audio systems and other means, may lead to permanent hearing loss, other pathophysiologic effects, and emotional disturbances."

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes noise as the first environmental nuisance of industrialized countries and early in 1990 launched "Inter-Health", a program aimed at warning all countries against lifestyle-related diseases, and urging them to take measures against these man-produced noncommunicable diseases.

The general and measurable consequences that intense sound levels may have on man are manifold, and they affect both the vegetative and the neuro-endocrine systems.

These physiological effects however, are certainly less significant than the hard to measure repercussions that noise may cause in the psychological level where damage is less apparent.

While it is true that irritating noise has increasingly become a polluting agent of our environment, it is fortunate that modern technology, one of the main sources of the problem, can also furnish the means to reduce its occurrence, its propagation, and its impact on man.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The World Medical Association, pursuant to its socio-medical objectives, draws attention to the major role that information and prevention play with regard to the damage resulting from intensive noise levels.

The World Medical Association recommends the adoption of a global strategy and urges national medical associations to:

1. alert the general public, in particular those responsible for the risk of pollution, and its potential victims.
2. encourage firms and equipment manufacturers to install isolating phonic material where necessary so as to ensure real collective protection of the personnel.
3. convince employees individually to protect themselves against irreducible noise.
4. inform young people of the risks of embracing the noise cult (acoustic drug), motor bikes, record players and radio, rock concerts, discotheques, portable radios with earphones, etc.
5. call for adequate legal regulations against intensive noise levels in public places, vacation resorts, convalescent homes and urban highways (isolating walls).
6. support the enactment of legal sanctions, and monitor the effectiveness of control measures.
7. prevail upon all educational authorities to introduce instruction at all school levels on the prevention and elimination of noise pollution.

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