

Brazil Teaches the World How to Stop Smoking

Contributed by Brazzil Magazine
Tuesday, 31 August 2004

The slogan "Smoking is a goal against your own side" was launched in Brazil by the National Cancer Institute (Inca) for National Anti-Smoking Day, which took place August 29.

The target population is made up of young people, since 90 percent of adult smokers became tobacco addicts by the time they were 19. Cigarette prices in Brazil are the sixth cheapest in the world, and 200 thousand people die each year as a consequence of smoking-related ailments.

The Director-General of the Inca, José Gomes Temporão, said that studies conducted by the Institute last year show that organized campaigns have succeeded in reducing the number of smokers, since the percentage of smokers in the population dropped from 32 percent in 1989 to the present level of 18.8 percent, lower than in Canada and the United States.

He commended the decision by the Ministry of Health to assure treatment in public hospitals for victims of nicotine dependence.

Most cigarette smokers are opposed to smoking in enclosed spaces, such as bars and restaurants. This was one of the findings of the Residential Survey formulated by the Inca and released in May. The study was based on interviews with nearly 50 thousand people in 15 Brazilian state capitals and the Federal District.

Seventy three percent of the smokers interviewed favor the existing restrictions on smoking in enclosed spaces. Most of them are individuals with little schooling and low income, which is precisely the group that includes the largest number of smokers in Brazil. Their chances of becoming tobacco users are 5 times greater than for other social classes.

The study also concluded that the photos used in anti-smoking publicity campaigns have the biggest impact on the population. The photos mentioned most frequently were the ones of a sick baby, a pregnant woman, and a lung disease patient in a hospital bed. According to the Inca, other countries are requesting these photos for use in similar campaigns.

Agência Brasil