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# Editorial

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The article by Dhumal and Gupta highlights a breakthrough in the strategies and policies for prevention of oral cancer. India has got one of the highest incidences of mouth cancer in the world. It is the commonest cause of cancer-related death among the Indian men. Nearly, 1 lac new mouth cancers are diagnosed every year and half of them die within 1 month of diagnosis. Nearly, 90% of mouth cancers are attributable to tobacco and supari usage. As per the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (2010) conducted by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 35% Indians are tobacco users (21% chew tobacco, 9% smoke and 5% smoke as well as chew). Therefore, chewing tobacco is the commonest form of tobacco consumption in India. Tobacco is commonly chewed along with supari that is also independently harmful to health, that is causative agent for mouth cancer, diabetes, hypertension and so on. Since, tobacco and supari are inertly bitter and unpalatable, industry adds flavorings to market it as a mouth freshener. Flavored tobacco and supari (such as pan masala, scented supari, supari mix, etc.) are very popular among youth. In India, 26% of the adult population are users of chewing form of tobacco with gutka and pan masala as the leading industrial preparations.

As mentioned by the authors, Maharashtra Government issued a notification in July 2012 to become the first state to prohibit gutka as well as pan masala. The notification was challenged in Mumbai High Court, but it was upheld by the bench. Buoyed by their success, the government decided to include other popular forms of flavored chewing tobacco and supari. Therefore, the new notification in July 2013 prohibited not only gutka but also all other forms of flavored chewing tobacco and flavored supari product.

In India, impeccable enforcement of the law poses mammoth challenges. It is heartening that the implementation of gutka/pan masala ban in Maharashtra is being taken very seriously. Dhumal and Gupta's article shows that Food and Drug Administration has contributed to tobacco control more than even the health department. I sincerely hope that other states take cue from Maharashtra and adopt such pro-public health policies.

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