

## **Methods and Merits of the Global Adult Tobacco Survey: International Comparability versus National Relevance**

Krishna Mohan Palipudi\*

Global Tobacco Control Branch, Office on smoking and Health,  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

[kpalipudi@cdc.gov](mailto:kpalipudi@cdc.gov)

Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS), a component of Global Tobacco Surveillance System (GTSS), is a newly implemented national household survey of adults aged 15 years old and older that assists countries in the formulation, tracking and implementation of effective tobacco control interventions, and countries could compare results across the other countries implementing this survey using a standard and consistent protocol. GATS, a global initiative, was implemented initially in 21 countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay and Viet Nam during 2008-2013 and is in its next phase of expansion to the other countries mainly in African Region. The rich data from the high burden countries both in terms of tobacco use and population gave a unique opportunity to understand and formulate key tobacco control interventions across the countries. The paper provides an understanding of methods and merits of a global adult tobacco surveillance system by addressing its international comparability without compromising the national relevance and provides a unique opportunity to share the contributions of National Statistical Offices in monitoring the world's leading cause of death (tobacco use) through Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS). The paper also outlines the implementation challenges, adaptations and integration of tobacco questions in existing national survey systems to suit the country specific situation yet maintaining the international comparability, data usage and availability. The paper includes wide range of topics within survey methodology starting from comprehensive standard protocol (general design strategy) to specific methodologies (both sampling and non-sampling errors) to data collection (use of handheld computers) to dissemination strategies with some key case studies from selected countries.

**Key Words:** Global Adult Tobacco Survey, international comparability, household survey, tobacco use, tobacco questions for surveys, integration