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PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE NEW NORMAL

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CONTROLLING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC POLLUTION IN SRI LANKA

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Introduction: Single-use plastics have become a major threat to the environment and all life forms. Sri Lankan soil, coastline, rivers, wetlands tanks, and other ecosystems have already become the dumping ground and polluted due to plastic material and micro-plastics. The impacts on marine biodiversity will have many negative results in the fishing industry.

Method: The Central Environmental Authority (C.E.A.) identified and published regulations for single-use plastic items and their manufacturing, sale, exhibition, use, and issue free of charge in 2017. The items prohibited were polythene lunch sheets, high-density polythene shopping bags, polystyrene form lunch boxes, and bags less than 20 microns in thickness. Also, it was prohibited the use of polythene for any kind of decorative purpose. The Sri Lanka government directed the C.E.A. to address the issue based on the regulatory powers available in the National Environmental Act.

Result: From 2018-2020 a total of 20,869 raids were conducted island-wide, and 1534 (7.35%) violations were detected. Prosecution actions were taken against the accused person in the respective magistrate's courts. Among these violators, 42 whole sale traders and manufacturers operate their illegal activities from western provinces. Also, it was detected that certain violators continue the same offense even after the first-time prosecution, indicating the punishment's lower effectiveness.

Conclusion: Further, strengthened controls on other environmentally significant single-use items are important. It is recommended to make mandatory to display the plastic-type on each

plastic product or packaging material to identify them during recycling easily.

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ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN SRI LANKA TO MONITOR TOBACCO, ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG INDUSTRIES AND THEIR ACTIVITIES USING A MOBILE APPLICATION

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Introduction and objectives: Monitoring the numerous business-sustenance tactics of the tobacco industry is laborious, especially at the ground level. Centre for Combating Tobacco (CCT) is the Sri Lankan tobacco observatory with the mandate to monitor tobacco industry interference and activities (TIIA). This study aimed to describe the output of a mobile application-based intervention for engaging public in monitoring TIIA in Sri Lanka.

Methods: Tobacco Unmasked_Hot Spots (TU_HotSpots-App), the trilingual mobile application, was launched in 2018 following feasibility-acceptability assessment. Fourteen months later, the Community Driven Tobacco Surveillance System, a network of TU_Host Spots-App-armed individuals in the community, was established to monitor TIIA. Freely downloadable, TU_HotSpots-App enables the user to submit reports under three categories: "HotSpots"—geographical locations of TIIA violating national law and WHO FCTC; "Media" promotions violating national law and FCTC article 13; and "Interference" violating FCTC article 5.3. Contents of submitted reports are reviewed, verified, processed and displayed on an interactive website (TU_HotSpots-Map) with a map showing actual geographical locations of "HotSpots" and a dashboard showing "Media" promotions. In 2020, TU-HotSpots-App

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