1 in 100 deaths attributed to second hand smoke

World Health Organization (WHO) researchers said that about one in 100 deaths around the world is due to second-hand smoke, which kills an estimated 600,000 people each year. WHO experts found that children are more heavily exposed to second-hand smoke than any other age-group, and about 165,000 of them die every year because of it.

“Two-thirds of these deaths occur in Africa and south Asia,” the researchers, led by Annette Pruss-Ustun of the WHO in Geneva, wrote in their study. WHO researchers looked at data that dated back from 2004 in 192 countries for their study. They used mathematical modeling to estimate deaths and the number of years lost of life in good health. They found that 40 percent of children, 55 percent of non-smoking men and 55 percent of non-smoking women were exposed to second-hand smoke in 2004 around the world.

This exposure was estimated to have caused 570,000 deaths from heart disease, 165,000 from lower respiratory infections, 56,000 from asthma and 21,400 from lung cancer.

The researchers said that for the full impact of smoking, these deaths should be added to the 5.1 million deaths a year attributed to active tobacco use. “Policy-makers should bear in mind that enforcing complete smoke-free laws will probably substantially reduce the number of deaths attributable to exposure to second-hand smoke within the first year of its implementation, with accompanying reduction in costs of illness in social and health systems,” she wrote.

Only 7.4 percent of the world population currently lives in jurisdictions with comprehensive smoke-free laws, and those laws are not always robustly enforced.

50 percent of canned tuna mislabeled

According to a new report based on genetic analysis, 50 percent of canned tuna tested in a dozen countries were mislabeled or had other irregularities.

Some of the 50 brands sampled contained different species of tuna across the same product, or had two different species in the same can.

The independent report was timed to coincide with the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), which is running in Paris through Saturday. ICCAT’s 48 member states, including the European Union, ensure the sustainability of fisheries in the Atlantic. Nina Thuellen, Greenpeace International oceans campaigner said: “Tuna companies are indiscriminately stuffing multiple species of tuna” She said that the mixing of species and inclusion of under-sized tuna from over-fished stocks is mainly due to the use of so-called fish aggregation devices, or FADs which attract the fish in open seas, where they are then caught in huge, curtain-like draw nets.

Endangered species of turtles and sharks also get trapped and die. Identification and sorting of juveniles is very difficult once the fish are in the freezers. This results in multiple species in the same can. “Retailers must act now to immediately shift their business away from cheap tuna caught using FADs,” Thuellen said, adding that the devices should be banned by ICCAT and other regional fisheries management organizations.

The tests analyzed canned tuna products from Austria, Australia, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Canada, Spain, Italy, the U.S., Britain, Switzerland and Germany. At least five brands were tested in each of those countries, totaling 165 different products. Five main species of tuna make up the annual worldwide catch of 4.0 to 4.5 million tons.