

# Self-care undervalued and underexploited weapon in the fight against killer non-communicable diseases

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*Self-care needs recognition as a vital part of managing health, not just by you, me and those we care about, but also by public authorities.*

GENEVA/HONGKONG, SWITZERLAND/CHINA, July 24, 2013 /EINPresswire.com/ -- International Self-Care movement, launched in China last year, has gone global in celebrating 24 July (24/7) as International Self-Care Day. The day encourages individual responsibility for health by raising awareness of the [basic steps to achieve well-being](#) through self-care and calls on public authorities to recognize the crucial role of self-care in reducing the socio-economic burden of diseases. The movement also appeals for establishing a UN World Self-Care Day to raise awareness of the importance of self-care around the world.

Today Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) lead to 63% of annual deaths worldwide and are recognized as a global killer and major health challenge, which touches individuals as well as society with the economic burden estimated at \$30 trillion over the next 20 years.

Yet NCDs are preventable to a large extent through better self-care - up to 80% of heart disease, stroke and type-2 diabetes and over a third of cancers could be prevented by individuals avoiding risks such as tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol.

"We all have a right to health but also a responsibility to play our part through [simple self-care habits](#). When practiced 24/7, they make a huge difference to our wellbeing" – says Dr Zhenyu Guo, the founder of the movement and initiator of the first Self-Care Day in China in 2012.

David Webber from WSMI believes that "self-care is catching on. Initiatives in support of self-care are taking place around the world. Individuals and decision-makers are starting to appreciate self-care as a powerful weapon to tackle the burden of diseases in terms of their impact on public health budgets and the toll they take on individuals."

However, despite some progress in recognizing the crucial role of self-care, it is still not seen as an integral part of effective health care systems, which are currently oriented to disease treatment.

Its benefits are also not sufficiently appreciated by policy makers or the general public to make a tangible difference.

The International Self-Care movement wishes the UN to recognize Self-Care Day on 24 July. “Through raising awareness, we want to encourage people to be active participants in their own self-care and also motivate governments to create self-care friendly policies both within and outside current health systems” explains Dr Guo.

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