CAPHRA
COALITION OF ASIA PACIFIC
TOBACCO HARM REDUCTION ADVOCATES

CAPHRA: Asia-Pacific Cannot Afford to Ignore Lessons on Reducing Smoking

CAPHRA calls for evidence-based policy to help adults and protect youth.

Manila, Philippines. [12 October 2026] - UK smoking among adults aged 18 and over fell to 9.8% in 2025, down from 10.6% in 2024 and 20.2% in 2011. These figures establish a long-term decline but do not, alone, explain its causes.

“The public-health goal is fewer people smoking and fewer people harmed,” said Nancy Loucas, CAPHRA’s Executive Coordinator. “Asia-Pacific governments cannot afford to ignore lessons that could help reduce the region’s deadly tobacco burden.”

What can the region learn from the UK, New Zealand and Japan?

The three countries offer different experiences, rather than a single policy model. UK and New Zealand public-health guidance recognises nicotine vaping as an effective smoking-cessation option for adults, while emphasising that it is not harmless and that smokers should stop smoking completely.

Japan offers evidence of a shift in tobacco consumption. Total cigarette sales fell 52.7% between 2011 and 2023, with increased heated-tobacco sales appearing to contribute alongside other factors, according to a study in Tobacco Control. That finding does not establish an equivalent reduction in deaths.

CAPHRA wants governments to assess these experiences alongside New Zealand’s approach. It calls for accessible cessation services, product standards, strict age verification and enforcement against sales to minors, while monitoring complete switching, continued smoking and youth uptake.

“We should not encourage people who have never smoked to start vaping,” said Clarisse Virgino, CAPHRA’s Philippines representative. “But protecting young people and helping adults stop smoking are not competing objectives. Good regulation must do both.”

The debate provides timely context for AFN26, taking place in Manila and online on 16–17 October. Its programme includes real-world tobacco harm-reduction outcomes.