

Nobel Laureate says Tobacco Ban Not Key to Combating Lung Cancer

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Nobel laureate Harold Varmus: "The focus should be on novel medicines and diagnostic tools and not on complete prohibition." Photo credit: PTI

American Nobel laureate Harold Varmus says the development of cutting-edge immunotherapies and diagnostic tools is the key to battling lung cancer, rather than a total ban on tobacco that would be impossible to enact.

In an interview with Press Trust of India (PTI), Varmus said, "Trying to prohibit tobacco or to ban tobacco entirely is a mistake because we know that you can't enforce complete prohibition. That is the kind of thing that leads to various forms of crime and it doesn't work."

"I don't think bans work very well. But I do think that not just in India and every country, including the US, where we still have 18% of our population smoking, we have people using nicotine vapes instead of cigarettes. All these are risk factors for cancer."

When asked if a complete ban on tobacco is the best way to fight the deadly disease, the 83-year-old responded, "The focus should be on novel medicines and diagnostic tools and not on complete prohibition."

Together with American immunologist Michael Bishop, Varmus won the 1989 Nobel Prize in Medicine for discovering DNA abnormalities that might turn a healthy cell into a cancerous one and cause cancer. Varmus was in India at the invitation of the Indian Academy of Sciences to deliver a series of lectures that were supposed to take place in 2020 but were postponed because of the pandemic.

Source: <https://www.tobaccoasia.com/news/nobel-laureate-says-tobacco-ban-not-key-to-combating-lung-ca/>