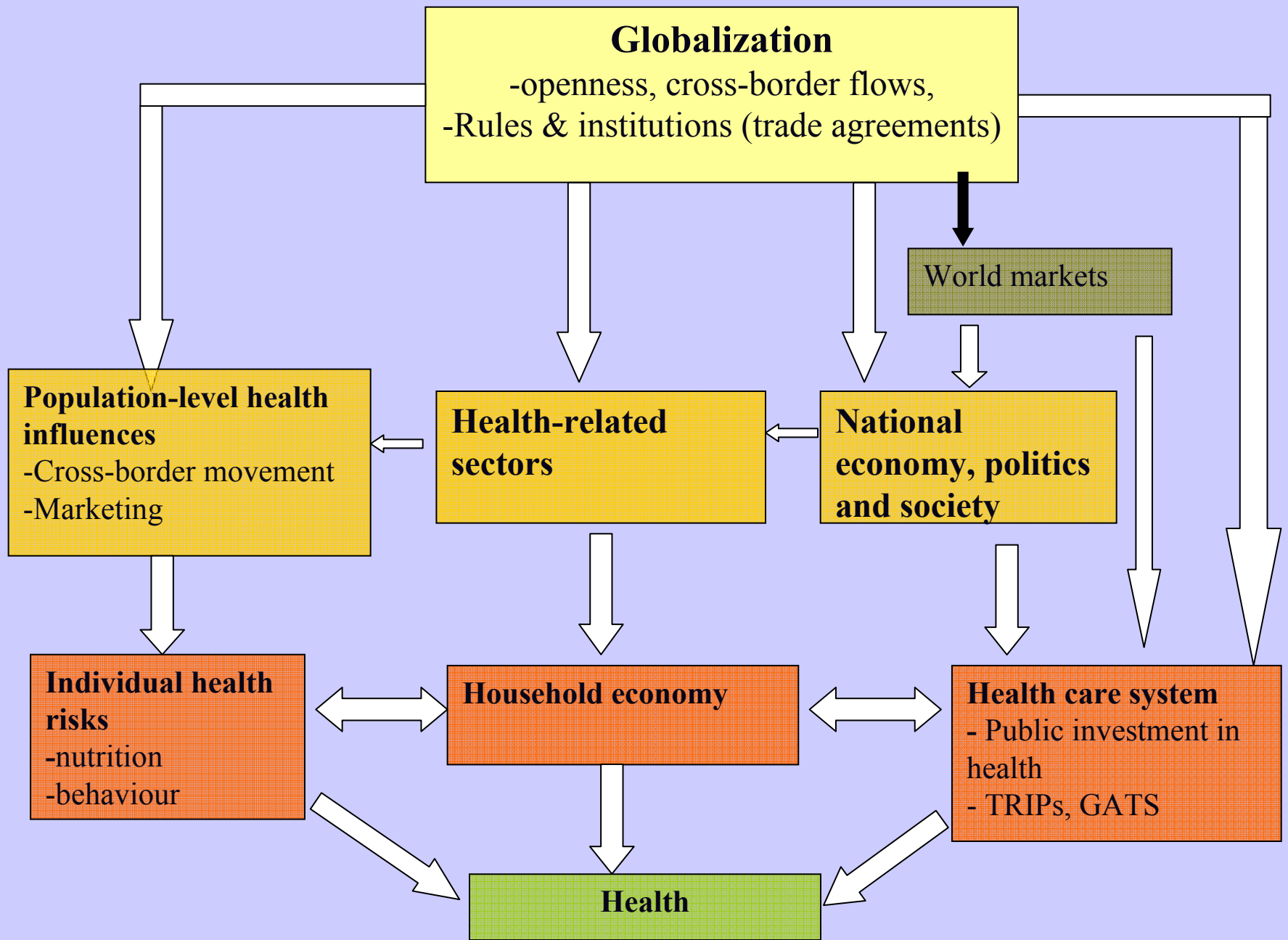


Globalization & its Impact on Youth Health in Asia

Cai Cai
Social Affairs Officer
Health and Development Section
Emerging Social Issues Division



Changing values & lifestyles

- Global media and marketing have an enormous influence on youth attitudes, values and behaviour
- The age of initiation into sex and substance use is falling
- Teenagers have been found to exchange sex for money – to fulfil their aspiration for luxurious lifestyles

Case of Thailand

Recent studies:

- Average age of first sexual experience in Thai teenagers dropped to below 13 yrs old
- A survey among 6,700 female students across 24 provinces showed:
 - 1,448 were already sexually experienced.
 - About 500 were forced by their partners into sex in the first instance, mostly with older men,
 - 80 admitted to having had more than 20 casual partners

Drug use

- In China's Yunnan province, over half of the registered 49,000 drug users are under 25
- More than 50% of injecting drug users in India, Thailand & Myanmar are young people aged 15-24
- Injecting drug use accounts for at least 40% of all HIV transmissions in China, Indonesia, Malaysia & Myanmar & Viet Nam

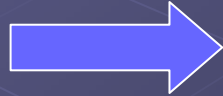
**Peer pressure
Frustration
Family problems**

**Global chain of illegal
drug manufacturing &
trafficking**

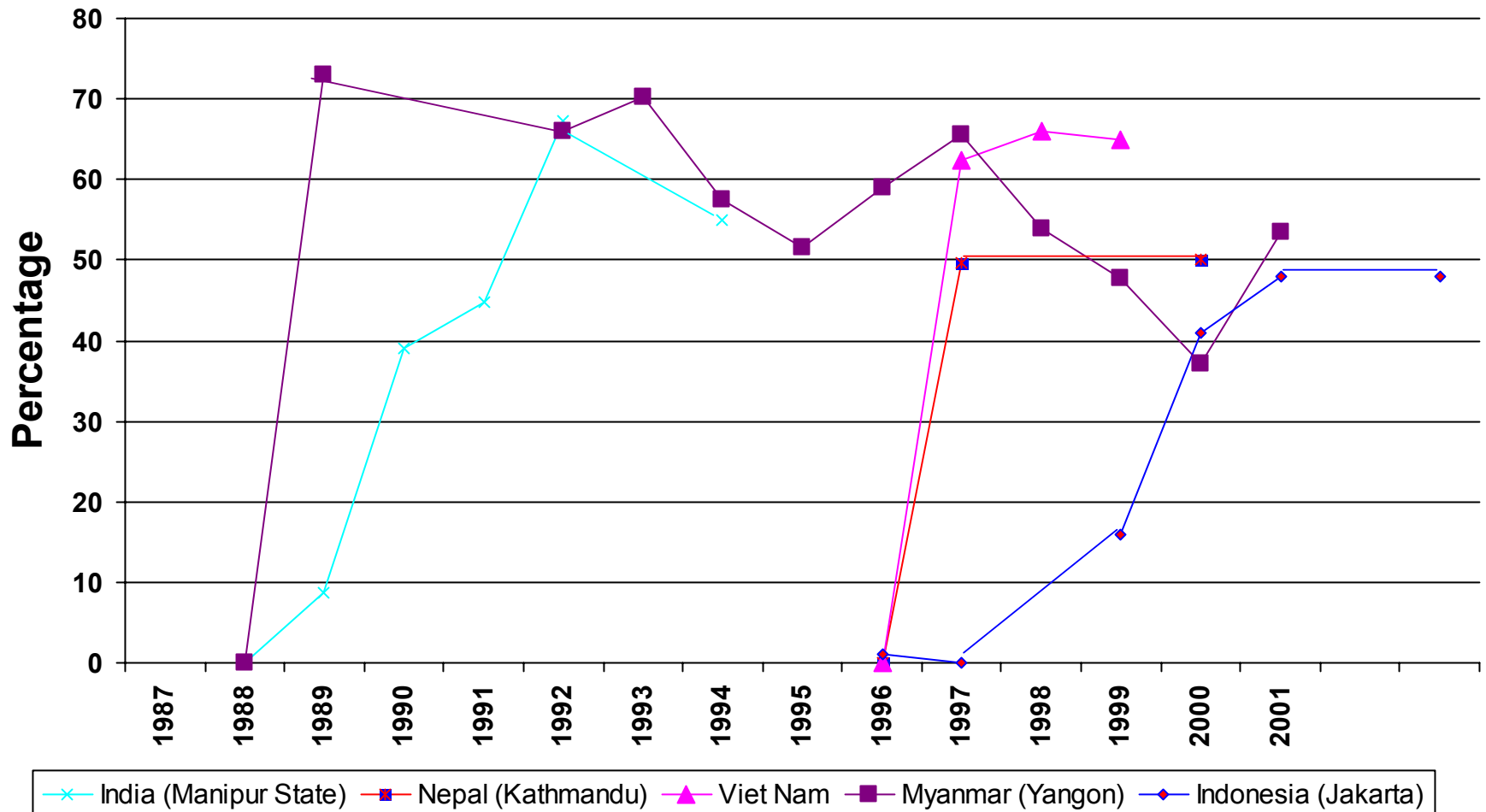
Demand

**Rising
drug use
among
youth**

Supply



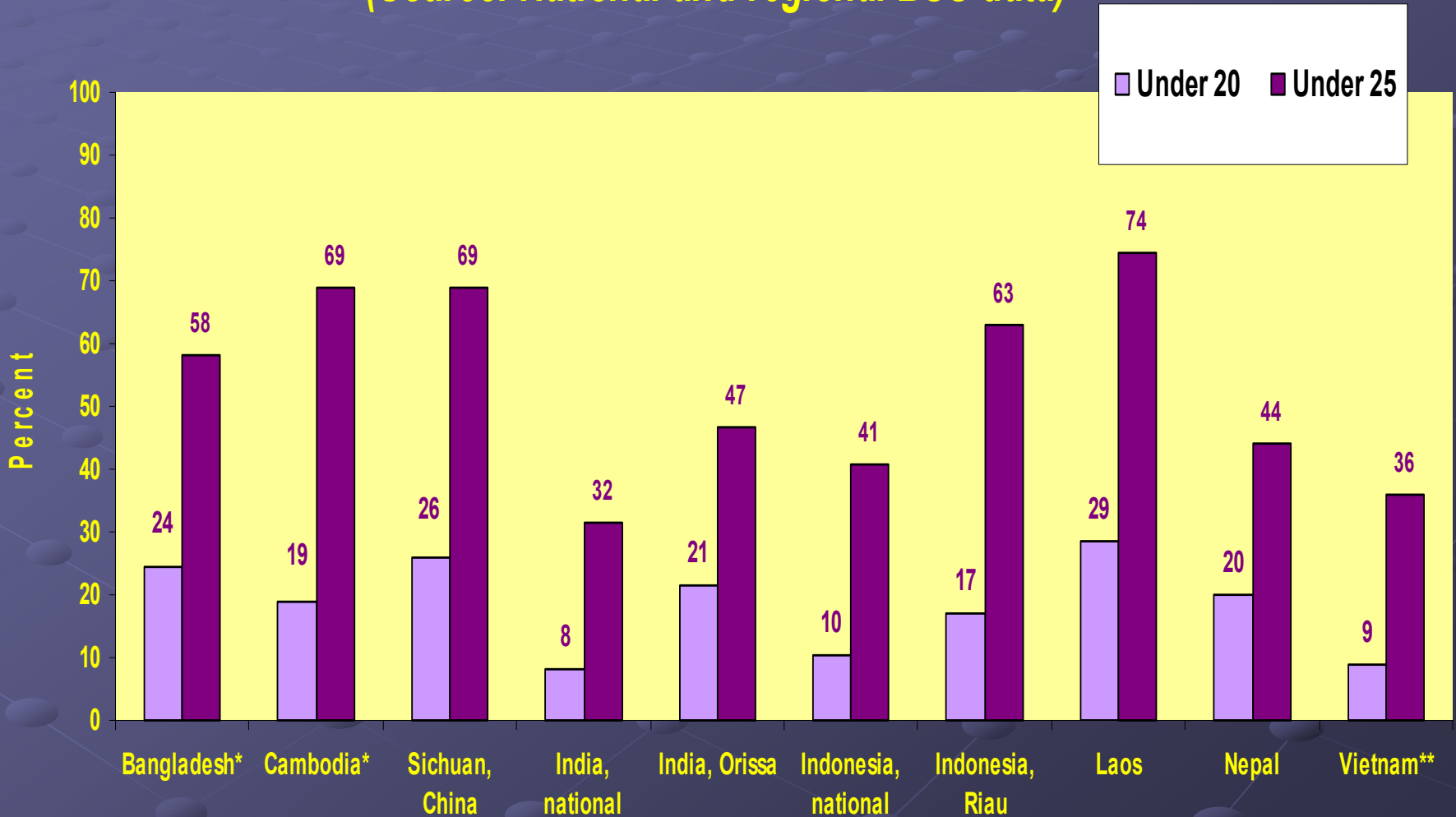
HIV prevalence among drug users can rise sharply in a few short months



Source: UNAIDS fact sheet update 2003 – prevalence in Injecting drug users and National surveillance systems, Indonesia and Vietnam

Percent of female sex workers who are teenagers and who are aged under 25, various Asian sites

(Source: National and regional BSS data)

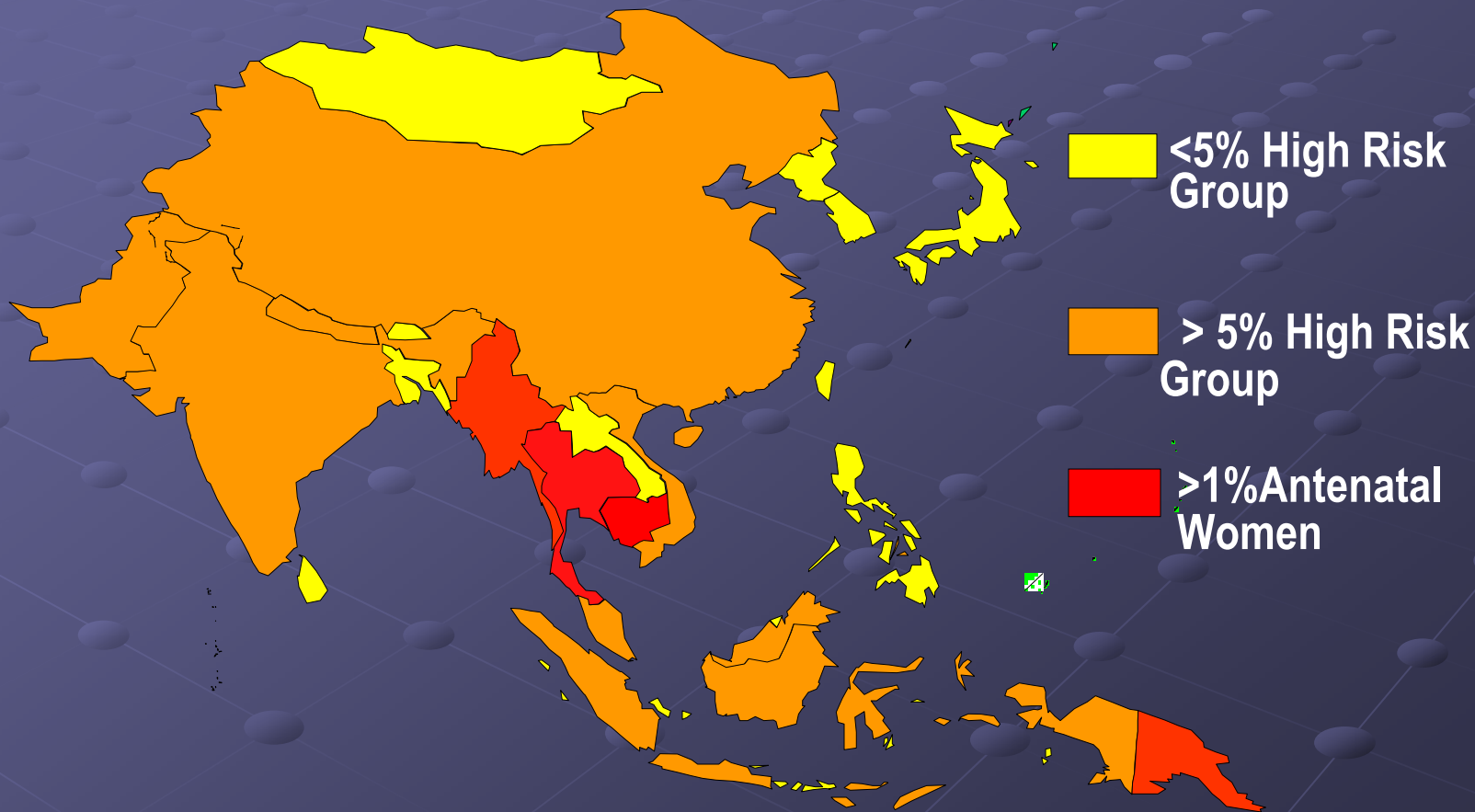


AIDS pandemic in Asia (2005)

8 M HIV+

1 M new infections

0.5 M deaths



Interplay of globalization & poverty

- Migrant workers - a significant proportion are young people
 - Isolated from mainstream society
 - Lack of access to information & health services
 - Spending spare time & disposable income on drinking & sex, which increases their risk to HIV infection
- Human trafficking – girls & young women are lured/forced into sex industry
- Transactional sex – a source of livelihood

Non-communicable diseases & globalization

- NCD conditions account for 62% of all deaths in Asia-Pacific (2002)
- Smoking & obesity – two of the most important global health risk factors: hypertension, heart disease, stroke & cancer
- Determinants of tobacco consumption: trade liberalization & global marketing
- Among young teens (aged 13 -15): about one in five smokes worldwide.

Smoking

- Evidence shows that around 50% of those who start smoking in adolescent years go on to smoke for 15 - 20 years.
- Between 80,000 and 100,000 children worldwide start smoking every day – roughly half of them live in Asia.
- Children smoking before reaching 10 years old:
 - Philippines: 14%
 - Some parts of China: 20-40%

Obesity: global epidemic

- Obesity poses a major risk for type2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, & certain forms of cancer.
- Obesity often co-exists with under-nutrition in developing countries.
- A third of South Asia's population is obese
- Between 1992 - 2002, more than 60 million Chinese became obese & 200 million overweight.
 - In cities, 12% of adults & 8% of children were obese
- In Thailand, the prevalence of obesity in 5-12 years old children rose from 12.2 per cent to 15-16 per cent in just two years.

Globalization of food industry

- Global food industry shapes our diets & mould our taste
- Controlled by a few large transnational corporations
- Expanding rapidly in transitional & developing countries

China:

KFC - 1400 restaurants in over 300 cities

McDonald - 700 restaurants

A 22-year old young woman from Nanjing, China



Trade agreements & health

- Doha Declaration on TRIPS Agreement & Public Health (Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights) 2001
 - *a historic breakthrough on putting public health interest above private commercial interest*
- However, poor countries are often pressurized to accept “TRIPS-plus” measures in bilateral & regional trade agreements

Access to newer essential medicines

- Life-saving medicines are unaffordable for the poor (eg. TB, HIV/AIDS, malaria, bacterial infections)
- In Asia: only 14% of who need antiretroviral (ARV) therapy were receiving it (2005)
- 2.2 million young people live with HIV & AIDS in Asia & half of new infections occur among youth
- Access to antiretroviral drugs is critical to enhancing their quality of life

Trade liberalization of health-related services

- General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)
- Modes of service supply under GATS:
 - 1: Cross-border supply of service (telemedicine, e-health)
 - 2: Consumption of services abroad
 - 3: Commercial presence (establishment of health facilities in other countries)
 - 4: Presence of natural persons (doctors/nurses practising in other countries)

Opportunities & risks

● Opportunities:

- Create new employment
- Improve access to new technology
- Remittances of health personnel overseas

● Risks:

- Brain drain: permanent loss of health personnel
- Develop 2-tiered health system – crowd out local population & divert resources to service foreigners

Internal brain drain

- Increased foreign investment
- Influx of foreign patients

2001: 24 hospitals – partial foreign ownership

Annual physician losses:

2000:	4.5%
2001:	7.6%
2002:	32.2%

Managing health implications of globalization

- Behaviour change interventions to strengthen protective factors: life skills education, peer education, community mobilization
- Provide services – access to condoms, voluntary counselling and testing, other essential health services
- Regulate advertising & sponsorship which promote diets, lifestyles, tobacco consumption that increase vulnerability to non-communicable diseases;
- Increase tax on tobacco, alcohol, and industries that cause health hazards & environmental damage

- Effective-use of TRIPS-compliant public health safeguards:
 - Modification of national legislation
 - Negotiating equitable pricing for newer essential medicines
- Before opening market: building institutional capacity for handling liberalized trade in health-related services