



IHPE Position Statement: Electronic Cigarettes

Tobacco smoking is the largest single preventable cause of ill health and death. In the UK the reduction in smoking should be seen as a public health success story.

Electronic Nicotine Delivery Devices (ENDDs or e-cigarettes) are increasingly popular, and in the UK we have already seen the establishment of high-street vendors of such products, thus potentially contributing to the perceived normalisation of this activity. The widespread use of ENDDs might also help to normalise smoking in public once more, and could act as a gateway to traditional cigarettes.

For existing smokers, they might be a temporary aid toward cessation efforts, however they are not without their own drawbacks. Nicotine is a highly addictive compound, and is therefore not harmless when tar and other substances are not present. There is also the possibility that ENDDs will develop a market of their own, and could appeal to young people and non-smokers, leading to a new drug habit that replaces smoking in the future. Research into such possibilities is not currently well developed.

The widespread use of such devices has not been demonstrated to be conducive to health, and as such IHPE is not in favour of ENDDs being widely advertised or promoted, and supports any move to restrict their use and sale only to circumstances where there is evidence for their effectiveness.

Recommendations

1. ENDDs should be seen as a part of the armory of devices intended to wean smokers away from cigarettes, and nothing more.
2. ENDDs should not be promoted to non-tobacco users.
3. More research is needed into the efficacy of ENDDs.
4. There needs to be further debate about the use of ENDDs in public places (including workplaces).
5. Careful monitoring of the promotion and use of ENDDs is needed.

Further reading:

Brandt AM. *The cigarette century. The rise, fall, and deadly persistence of the product that defined America.* New York, Basic Books, 2007.

Brown J, Beard E, Kotz D, et al. Real-world effectiveness of e-cigarettes when used to aid smoking cessation: a cross-sectional population study. *Addiction*. 2014 doi: 10.1111/add.12623

Britton, J., and Bogdanovica, I. (2014). Electronic cigarettes: A report commissioned by Public Health England. London: Public Health England.

Royal College of Physicians. (2014). What you need to know about electronic cigarettes. Royal College of Physicians.
<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/commentary/what-you-need-know-about-electronic-cigarettes> (accessed 22 Aug 2014).

Vardavas, C., Filippidis, F.T., Agaku, I.T. (2014). Determinants and prevalence of e-cigarette use throughout the European Union: a secondary analysis of 26 566 youth and adults from 27 countries. *Tobacco Control* doi::10.1136/ tobaccocontrol-2013-051394.

Lead Authors: Dr Michael C. Watson and Dr Mark Forshaw
Institute of Health Promotion and Education
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