

Not Blowing Smoke, Vaping Works



By Lila Abassi — August 22, 2017



Vaping [1]

There is zero doubt that the harms associated with smoking are considerable. Thanks to public health efforts, smoking cigarettes is recognized as one of the biggest contributors to death and disability globally. This is why when tools become available to reduce or eliminate cigarette use we should embrace it versus shooting it down with false fears.

We have been very vocal about our support for e-cigarette (in all its variety) use as a safer alternative to combustible cigarettes and a new article published in the journal, *Addictive Behaviors*, lends further credence to our advocacy. The [study](#) [2] included two years of data (2014 and 2015) from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). For those unfamiliar with [NHIS](#) [3], it is an annual survey conducted by the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) National Center For Health Statistics (NCHS) asking all forms of questions about the population's health and behavior.

Data from a sample of 15,532 recent smokers (either current or those who quit on or after 2010) revealed 25% were former smokers and of those 52% who quit in the last five years were daily users of e-cigarettes versus 28% of those who never used e-cigarettes ($p < 0.0001$). The authors of the study concluded that, "daily e-cigarette use was the strongest correlate of being quit at the time of the survey, suggesting that some smokers may have quit with frequent e-cigarette use or are using the products regularly to prevent smoking relapse."

This study was based on cross-sectional data provided from a survey. It has its limitations. According to the paper, however, their data is consistent with data from prospective studies that reveal frequent and sustained e-cigarette use is positively correlated with smoking cessation.

Cigarette smoking is heavily stigmatized in society which provides further motivation for individuals to either quit or seek out other less offensive strategies to quell their addiction. As we have [previously written](#)

[4], in a study conducted in the United Kingdom, the users of e-cigarettes did not view smoking as normal behavior – in fact, they viewed it in a very negative light. This is vital as it demonstrates that the use of e-cigarettes does not normalize or legitimize smoking cigarettes. In fact, it does the opposite.

The widely disseminated fact that cigarettes are harmful is made even more apparent as the prevalence of teen smoking has dropped from 4.7 million in 2015 to 3.9 million in 2016. We had previously reported on this data provided by the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Results from that study indicated a drop across the board in most forms of smoking among teens. As [Dr. Julianna LeMieux](#) [5] pointed out in her article, overall, what this means is, “Vaping is being used for smoking cessation, or harm reduction, or as a rebellious experiment, but it is not leading kids into cigarettes, or something would be increasing.”

E-cigarette use does not normalize smoking. Data about any potential long-term harm is limited as vaping is a relatively new phenomenon and we have not amassed such data as yet. Until then, we stand by what we have said repeatedly in the past – e-cigarettes are [much less toxic](#) [6] than combustible cigarettes. We need to support this strategy for smoking cessation for the obvious reason that it is far, far less harmful than smoking.

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[1] https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/94/E-Cigarette-Electronic_Cigarette-E-Cigs-E-Liquid-Vaping-Cloud_Chasing_%2816161316908%29.jpg

[2] <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S009174351730261X>

[3] https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/nhis_questionnaires.htm

[4] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/08/16/e-cigarettes-make-smoking-seem-abnormal>

[5] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/06/20/good-news-tobacco-among-teens-still-losing-its-cool-11453>

[6] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2011/09/01/smoke-and-mirrors-behind-fda-report-on-e-cigarettes>