

Electronic Cigarette: More Dangerous Than You Think

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Dear Sir,

Tobacco smoking is one of the leading causes of all types of cancer in the world. There are approximately 1 billion tobacco and approximately 30% males and 7% females are addicted to it¹. The most common type of product smoked is cigarettes, but there are also different types of cigarettes like cigarillos, cigar, pipes or water pipes (hookah). Smokeless tobacco is also popular in very different parts of the world. It can be used in chewable form, sniffed into nose or can be placed in mouth between cheeks and gums. There is another type of smoking, popular nowadays, which is electronic or e-cigarette. They are occasionally called e-cigs, e-hookahs, mods, vape pens, vapes, tank systems, and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).

They can come prefilled with e-liquid or other liquids can be added to the device. Electronic-cigarettes arise in various forms and dimensions. Majority have battery, a heating system, and a fluid container. The liquids contain of propylene glycol, glycerine, water, nicotine and flavouring agents that attract the youth. An e-cigarette was first available in China in 2004. A study reported that approximately 3.2 % people in America were addicted to

e-cigarette². The popularity of electronic smoking has been boosted worldwide, including Pakistan³. E-cigarette is a manual battery driven aerosol that incites smoking but is devoid of blazing tobacco. The process of smoking an e-cigarette is called as vaping and the consumer is known as vaper. The use of e-cigarette increased by more than 75% between 2017 to 2018⁴. Most of the e-cigarettes have nicotine, which is affecting our children's brain health. A lesser amount of serious effects include abdominal pain, headache, blurry vision, throat and mouth irritation⁵. For the time being, the industry, the tobacco research community and online information are endorsing it as a less harmful tobacco termination device. Its use is also supported in the latest science and technology report by the UK government⁶. It is considered as less harmful compared to other tobacco products. The e-cigarettes may produce less adverse effects compared to tobacco products⁷. Besides being a risk, it has its benefits. Electronic cigarettes are not only relatively less harmful than conventional cigarettes but are also being acknowledged as a tool for smoking cessation as they can be used as an alternative to quit smoking like lozenges, chewing gum, patches. There are several models of electronic cigarette like cigalikes, vape pens, coils, mods, bullets.

It is recommended that government should ban these products and make them less available for young generation. Free awareness programs should be planned and implemented to spread awareness among people. Healthy use of social media should be sketched to create awareness regarding e-cigarette.

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