

Waterpipes: A new pastime for the young?

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As fewer people puff on cigarettes, a new smoking trend may be gaining popularity among North American youth. A study published in the journal *Pediatrics* has found that almost one-quarter of young adults in Montreal had used waterpipes (also known as shishas or hookahs) in the past year.

"The popularity of waterpipes may be due in part to perceptions that they are safer than [cigarettes](#). However, waterpipe smoke contains [nicotine](#), carbon monoxide, carcinogens and may contain greater amounts of tar and heavy metals than [cigarette smoke](#)," warns senior investigator Jennifer O'Loughlin, a professor at the University of Montreal Department Of Social and Preventive Medicine and a scientist at the University of Montreal Hospital Research Center.

As part of a longitudinal cohort investigation (NDIT Study), 871 youth aged 18 to 24 completed questionnaires on their smoking habits. The research team, which included scientists from the University of Montreal, the National Institute of Public Health of Quebec and McGill University, found that 23 percent of respondents had used a waterpipe within the last 12 months and that 5 percent had used waterpipes one or more times in the past month.

The study found waterpipes to be particularly popular among young, English-speaking males who lived on their own and had a higher household income. In addition, the research team found that waterpipe users were more likely to use other psychoactive substances such as cigarettes, marijuana, illicit drugs and alcohol.

More information: The paper, "Waterpipe Smoking Among North American Youths," published in the journal Pediatrics, was authored by Erika Dugas, Daniel Cournoyer and Jennifer O'Loughlin of the University of Montreal and University of Montreal Hospital Research Center; Michèle Tremblay of the National Institute of Public Health of Quebec and Nancy C. P. Low of McGill University.

www.pediatrics.aappublications.org

Provided by University of Montreal

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