

# Expert argues against smokescreen on e-cigarette research

June 5 2015

---



Until e-cigarettes are approved as medicines, smokers in Australia must obtain them from the black market.

A leading Australian substance abuse expert is pleading for moderation in policies on e-cigarettes.

The University of Queensland's Professor Wayne Hall said current law on electronic nicotine delivery systems placed researchers – and people who wanted to use e-[cigarettes](#) to quit smoking – in a difficult situation.

E-cigarettes containing nicotine cannot legally be sold in Australia.

"We should not have to choose between banning e-cigarettes completely and selling them alongside children's candy," Professor Hall said.

Professor Hall is an advisor to the World Health Organisation and the director of UQ's Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research.

"We are told e-cigarettes will only be available to smokers as medicinal products to stop them smoking if clinical trials show them to be safe and effective.

"However, regulation as medicines may not be the best regulatory model and, until the products are approved as medicines, smokers must obtain them from the black market.

"Effectively, we are treating e-cigarettes like heroin or cocaine, and stifling any real research on their effectiveness."

Such is debate on the topic, Professor Hall's paper - Ethical issues raised by a ban on the sale of electronic nicotine devices—has met diverse reactions from around the world before its official publication.

Professor Hall and UQ collaborators Dr Coral Gartner and Dr Cynthia Forlini said those who recommended legalising e-cigarettes were often portrayed as "in the pay of the tobacco industry".

But he said this, and other forms of ad hominem argument, prevented a better understanding of ways of combating one of the world's greatest causes of preventable death.

"A policy that bans a less harmful form of nicotine while still allowing the sale of cigarettes is inconsistent," Professor Hall said.

"Laws are giving much higher priority to the interests of hypothetical

smokers (who could take up smoking via e-cigarettes) at the expense of current, especially addicted, smokers.

"I do not advocate laissez faire, but rather closely-regulated e-cigarette sales for current smokers as a step towards an increased regulation of the most harmful tobacco products – cigarettes.

"If research proves [e-cigarettes](#) are much safer than cigarettes and are an acceptable substitute, we would have a strong case for removing cigarettes from convenience stores and supermarkets."

**More information:** "Ethical issues raised by a ban on the sale of electronic nicotine devices." *Addiction*, [DOI: 10.1111/add.12898](#)

Provided by University of Queensland

Citation: Expert argues against smokescreen on e-cigarette research (2015, June 5) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-06-expert-smokescreen-e-cigarette.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--