

Most under age 35 say e-cigs are safer, study aims to find out

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A new study shows a majority of Americans under the age of 35, and 54% of men in that age group, think electronic cigarettes are less harmful to your lungs than traditional cigarettes. Ryan Billingham, of Columbus, Ohio, wanted to know for sure, so he volunteered for a study that is measuring what impact, if any, electronic cigarettes have on the lungs. Credit: The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center

Most Americans under age 35 think that using electronic cigarettes does not cause as much damage lung health as compared with traditional cigarettes, according to the results of a new national consumer survey.

The survey - which included more than 2,000 people under the age of 35 - showed that 44 percent of survey respondents reported believing that e-cigarettes are less harmful to the lungs than traditional cigarettes. Among men specifically, that number jumped to 54 percent who think e-cigarettes are safer.

"The truth is there is just so much we don't know about these new products," said Peter Shields, MD, a thoracic oncologist, cancer control researcher and deputy director of The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center - Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute. "We have no idea where in the spectrum these are, in terms of safety. Are they like cigarettes, or nothing like cigarettes? Do they affect people the same if they've never smoked, or a lot worse? We need to figure this out."

Ongoing Clinical Studies Evaluate Health Impact The OSUCCC - James is recruiting healthy volunteers who currently use tobacco products for two clinical studies underway to evaluate the health effects of [electronic cigarettes](#) (known as "e-cigs" or "vaping") and other tobacco products.

"There is minimal data available regarding the direct health effects of e-cig use or vaping, but these products have gained rapid popularity among existing smokers and non-smokers alike, including young adults," says Shields. "We are concerned that people assume these products have fewer negative health effects as compared with cigarettes and other tobacco products. The reality is that they are still a tobacco product and people are still inhaling potentially harmful chemicals. They should not be considered a 'safer' option until science has the opportunity to catch up with the consumer market."

On May 5, 2016, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) finalized a rule extending its regulatory authority to all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, cigars, hookah tobacco and pipe tobacco. Prior to this, there was no federal law prohibiting retailers from selling e-cigarettes, hookah tobacco or cigars to people under age 18. The final FDA went into effect Aug. 8, 2016.

The OSUCCC - James research is being done to provide the FDA with scientific data to guide consumer regulation of tobacco products. The research is funded by the FDA and the National Cancer Institute.



Doctors are putting tiny cameras into the lungs of volunteers to see what happens when they use electronic cigarettes. The study, currently being conducted at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center - Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute, will use video and fluid from patients' lungs to see what effects, if any, electronic cigarettes have on the lungs. Credit: The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center

Provided by The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center

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