

Mothers who vape during pregnancy put babies at asthma risk

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A UTS-led study of the effects of smoking electronic cigarettes during pregnancy has been hailed by the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) in its stand against legalising nicotine in e-cigarettes.

Using a mouse model and human lung cells, the UTS Molecular Biosciences Research Team study, led by Pawan Sharma, David Chapman and Brian Oliver, found [e-cigarette](#) vaping among expectant

mothers increased the risk and severity of [allergic asthma](#) in their babies.

"E-cigarettes are being regarded as a tool to help quit smoking, so we considered the effect of maternal e-cigarette vaping an important area to look in to," Dr Sharma said.

"Our study indicated e-vaping in [pregnancy](#) was associated with reduced lung function and an increased risk of asthma in the mothers' offspring. These findings show that e-cigarette use during pregnancy should not be considered safe."

The UTS team's research is supported by an international study in which laboratory trials concluded that when e-cigarettes are used as a healthier substitute for tobacco smoking during pregnancy, mothers may still be posing significant neurological risks to their unborn offspring.

Earlier this year, Australia's drug regulator, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) rejected an application to relax the ban on e-cigarettes containing [nicotine](#).

Professor Peter Gibson, TSANZ President, said the evidence did not support the lifting of the ban.

"While electronic cigarettes are likely to be less dangerous than [smoking](#) cigarettes, they are not harmless," he said.

"We have an increasing body of evidence pointing to the harms of e-cigarettes containing nicotine."

Australia's ban on e-cigarettes containing nicotine was introduced in 2009. In September 2016, an application to the TGA proposed nicotine in e-cigarettes at certain concentrations should be exempt on the basis that they provide an alternative pathway for smokers who are unable or

unwilling to quit. The TGA decided in March to continue the ban.

Dr Chapman said e-cigarettes still exposed users to numerous toxic compounds.

"It is unknown whether a reduction in these compounds equates to improved health outcomes. Nicotine is a highly addictive compound and itself leads to detrimental health outcomes."

Provided by University of Technology, Sydney

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