

Chest physicians split on pros and cons of e-cigarettes

May 1 2017, by Ziba Kashef



Credit: stock.adobe.com

Patients are asking their chest physicians about using e-cigarettes to quit smoking, but those physicians are divided about whether the products do more harm than good, according to a Yale-led study. The finding demonstrates the need for more research on e-cigarettes that will help physicians counsel their patients who smoke.

Since the invention of e-cigarettes in the early 2000s, experts have disagreed about their role in smoking cessation and reducing harms from smoking. While some experts believe that e-cigarettes are simply a tool for getting consumers—particularly youth—addicted to nicotine, others view them as a potential alternative for smokers who struggle to quit with traditional cessation therapies.

To get a handle on the opinion of [chest physicians](#), Stephen Baldassarri, M.D., and his co-authors conducted a survey of members of the American College of Chest Physicians. The survey asked about the providers' experiences with [e-cigarette](#) users and their opinion about the products.

Of the nearly 1,000 respondents, the vast majority, 88 percent, reported that their [patients](#) had inquired about e-cigarettes, and one-third said at least some of their patients use the products. "Physicians are likely to encounter this in their practice," said Baldassarri, a clinical fellow in pulmonary medicine.

More respondents than not—41 percent compared with 21 percent—disagreed with the notion that patients could improve their health by switching from [tobacco smoking](#) to e-cigarettes. However, the physicians were split about whether e-cigarettes promoted smoking cessation.

"Although very few of the respondents thought that e-cigarettes were more harmful than smoking, many were not convinced that switching from smoking to e-cigarette use would improve a patient's health," he noted. "There was also a clear divide among the survey [respondents](#) regarding whether the products should be used as a smoking cessation aid."

This divergence in opinion about e-cigarettes, which mirrors results from prior surveys, points to the need for more research. While most

providers would agree that they do not want nonsmokers or youth adopting e-cigarettes, questions remain about the risks and benefits for traditional smokers.

"Further research into these [products](#) is going to be critical for providing the evidence base for physicians to make appropriate recommendations for their patients who smoke," he said.

More information: Stephen R. Baldassarri et al. Practise Patterns and Perceptions of Chest Health Care Providers on Electronic Cigarette Use: An In-Depth Discussion and Report of Survey Results, *Journal of Smoking Cessation* (2017). [DOI: 10.1017/jsc.2017.6](https://doi.org/10.1017/jsc.2017.6)

Provided by Yale University

Citation: Chest physicians split on pros and cons of e-cigarettes (2017, May 1) retrieved 20 March 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-05-chest-physicians-pros-cons-e-cigarettes.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>
--