

Tobacco 'power wall' linked to adolescents' views about e-cigarettes

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Adolescents who view advertising for tobacco products on the tobacco "power wall" in convenience stores report being more willing to try vaping products in the future compared to peers who visited a store

where the tobacco power wall was hidden, according to a new RAND Corporation study.

Adolescents who were exposed to the power wall during a shopping trip were about 15 percent more likely to say they would be willing to use electronic cigarettes in the future as compared to adolescents who were not exposed to the power wall.

Researchers say the findings provide more evidence that the point-of-sale advertising found in [convenience stores](#) is a persuasive force in encouraging young people to use tobacco. E-cigarettes are now the most commonly used [tobacco products](#) among young people in the United States. The findings are published online by the journal *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*.

"Our findings provide evidence that hiding the tobacco wall in [convenience](#) stores might reduce the number of adolescents who try e-cigarettes," said Michael S. Dunbar, the study's lead author and a behavioral scientist at RAND, a nonprofit research organization. "This is evidence that the tobacco power wall helps influence the attitudes of adolescents toward not only combustible cigarettes, but vaping products as well."

Most of the tobacco industry's advertising spending is focused on point-of-sale retail locations such as convenience stores. These outlets are awash in posters for tobacco products, signs for price promotions and the tobacco power wall—the display of cigarettes, other tobacco products and—in recent years—e-cigarettes that is prominent behind the checkout counter.

Canada and several other countries have enacted laws requiring that the power walls be hidden from view and only customers of legal age may view tobacco products.

The RAND study was conducted in a one-of-a-kind laboratory that replicates a full-size convenience [store](#) and involved 160 middle and high school students aged 11 to 17.

Study participants were given \$10 and allowed to shop in the laboratory store for whatever items they wanted. For half of the study participants, the tobacco power wall was openly displayed and for the other half, the tobacco power wall was hidden behind an opaque barrier.

Participants were surveyed before and after their shopping experience about a variety of topics and demographic information.

Convenience stores were the most-common source of exposure to [e-cigarette](#) advertising among study participants, with more than three-quarters reporting some exposure to e-cigarettes ads in stores and 14 percent reporting seeing e-cigarettes in convenience stores most of the time. Television was the next-most-common source of exposure to e-cigarette advertising.

After accounting for factors such as demographic characteristics and prior use of cigarettes and e-cigarettes, researchers found that exposure to the visible tobacco [power](#) wall was associated with significant increases in willingness to use e-cigarettes in the future.

"These findings suggest that policies aimed at limiting exposure to e-cigarette and other tobacco advertising at the point of sale may help reduce the impact of industry [advertising](#) efforts on future nicotine and [tobacco](#) product use among adolescents," Dunbar said.

Provided by RAND Corporation

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