

New study finds global adolescent vaping is low

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A new study published today in the scientific journal *Addiction* has found that approximately 8.6% of adolescents reported using e-cigarettes (vaping) in the past 30 days, but only 1.7% engaged in frequent vaping. This suggests most adolescents who vape are experimenting but not making it a habit.

Researchers from the University of Queensland (Australia) wanted to estimate as far as possible the global prevalence of [adolescent](#) vaping. The researchers analyzed data from 151,960 adolescents in 47 countries who participated in the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Global Youth Tobacco Survey between 2015 and 2018. The overall weighted prevalence of adolescent vaping and frequent vaping in the past 30 days was 8.6% and 1.7% respectively.

Lead author Dr. Gary Chan says, "There are two likely explanations for the low levels of frequent vaping among young people. First, [e-cigarettes](#) are relatively new and are often sold in colorful packages with highly palatable [flavors](#) that could appeal to adolescents, thus leading to experimentation but not continued use. Second, while some e-cigarettes contain high levels of nicotine, adolescents can also vape non-nicotine or low nicotine e-cigarettes and avoid becoming addicted. Future WHO surveys should ask participants to disclose whether [nicotine](#) is in the vaping liquids they use."

The researchers also wanted to test the association between the implementation of World Health Organization (WHO) tobacco control policies and adolescent vaping. In 2008, WHO introduced the MPOWER policy package, with six policies to reduce tobacco use: monitoring, smoke-free environments, cessation programs, health warnings, advertising bans, and taxation. Implementation of these policies has reduced tobacco use; however, it is unclear if these policies have had any impact on youth uptake of e-cigarettes.

Using data from the 44 countries where implementation data were available, the researchers found inconclusive evidence that implementation of five of the MPOWER policies was associated with lower adolescent vaping. Implementation of the sixth policy—higher taxes on tobacco products—was curiously associated with more adolescent [vaping](#). This suggests that some adolescents in countries with

a higher tobacco tax may be substituting e-cigarettes for [cigarettes](#).

More information: Association between the implementation of tobacco control policies and adolescent vaping in 44 lower-middle, upper-middle, and high-income countries, *Addiction* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/add.15892](#)

Provided by Society for the Study of Addiction

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