

# Experimenting with different vapes could be crucial to help people quit smoking

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Experimenting with commercially available vapes may be important for some people's success in giving up smoking, according to new research.

The University of East Anglia led a study which found that [giving out free e-cigarette starter packs in hospital emergency departments](#) to people who smoke helped one in four people quit.

"How do people quit [smoking](#) using e-cigarettes? A mixed-methods exploration of participant smoking pathways following receiving an opportunistic e-cigarette based smoking cessation intervention" is published in the journal [Addiction](#).

The trial, which was run by UEA's Norwich Clinical Trials Unit, took place across six UK hospitals, and this latest research delves into the different ways people transitioned from smoking to vaping after receiving the e-cigarette smoking cessation intervention.

More than half of participants the research team managed to contact six months after their visit to the [emergency department](#) had quit or reduced smoking and a third of those who quit smoking were also not vaping.

Lead author Dr. Emma Ward, from UEA's Norwich Medical School, said, "There is a school of thought that vapes should only be available on prescription.

"However, our findings suggest that over a third of quitters, who were given a vape to help them quit by a health care professional, went on to experiment with different devices bought from shops or online.

"Some people managed to quit smoking soon after being given the vape, while others used both cigarettes and vapes for a period, taking longer than a month to quit.

"Satisfaction with vaping was important for success with quitting smoking, but personal motivation and being in a supportive environment were also significant factors."

A total of 1,010 adult daily smokers were involved in the trial, with 505 receiving the free vapes in A&E.

Only intervention participants who responded at six months follow-up were included in the analysis for this latest study, resulting in a survey sample of 366 participants.

A total of 24 participants took part in interviews as part of the trial evaluation and were selected to represent the demographics of the main study sample.

The authors say the research highlights the effectiveness of opportunistic e-cigarette interventions, demonstrating multiple quitting pathways, showing that different people benefit in various ways.

Dr. Ward added, "Some people quit smoking following the [intervention](#) without long-term [e-cigarette](#) use, while others benefited from longer-term use to avoid smoking relapse.

"Those less experienced with vaping may be particularly receptive to receiving opportunistic support in a medical setting."

The findings support previous research conducted by Dr. Ward, which showed that [accessing vapes via the NHS might not be appealing to everyone](#), because some people do not see e-cigarettes as treatments but more as consumer products that they can shop for themselves.

As the research was only a trial, people who smoke are reminded that A&E departments are not currently handing out free vapes.

**More information:** Emma Ward et al, How do people quit smoking using e-cigarettes? A mixed-methods exploration of participant smoking pathways following receiving an opportunistic e-cigarette based smoking

cessation intervention, *Addiction* (2024). [DOI: 10.1111/add.16633](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.16633)

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