

E-cigarettes not meeting potential as 'disruptive technology,' public health study shows

9 May 2016



Credit: Georgia State University

Most smokers who have tried electronic cigarettes have rejected them as less satisfying than regular cigarettes, reducing their potential to be a "disruptive technology" that could help a significant number of smokers to quit, according to a recent study by a team of researchers at the Tobacco Center of Regulatory Science (TCORS) at Georgia State University.

E-cigarettes, also referred to as Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems or ENDS, "need to improve as a satisfying alternative or the attractiveness and appeal of regular cigarette must be degraded to increase the potential of ENDS replacing regular cigarettes," according to lead author Dr. Terry F. Pechacek, professor of Health Management and Policy.

The findings are published in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*.

The researchers surveyed a nationally representative sample of 5,717 U.S. adults in 2014, asking questions about their awareness of e-

cigarettes, use of such products and reasons for using traditional and novel [tobacco](#) products.

Among the 144 former cigarette smokers who had tried e-cigarettes, nearly 30 percent (or 43 people) continued to use them as a satisfying alternative to regular cigarettes.

But among the 585 smokers in the study, nearly 58 percent (or 337 people) reported they found e-cigarettes unsatisfying and stopped using them. Meanwhile, more than 40 percent of the group of smokers (or 248 people) continued to smoke cigarettes and use e-cigarettes, known as dual use. The primary motivations reported by dual users for using e-cigarettes was reducing harm to their health and trying to cut down or quit smoking.

Based upon the 2014 survey data, the authors estimated about 2.4 million U.S. adults were helped in quitting regular cigarettes by using e-cigarettes, with 1.4 million of these smokers quitting in the past year. However, they note that they could not determine the impact of e-cigarettes on the national rate of people quitting regular cigarettes because they could not assess how many of these former [smokers](#) would have successfully quit without using e-cigarettes nor how many dual users may have been delayed in quitting cigarettes.

"To encourage a potentially positive pattern of ENDS replacing cigarettes," the authors wrote, "it can be argued that efforts are needed by the public health community to reduce the appeal and attractiveness of the cigarette and other combusted tobacco products, namely, decreasing the product, promotion, placement and price advantage of these more lethal combusted tobacco products."

More information: Terry F. Pechacek et al. The Potential That Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems

Can be a Disruptive Technology: Results From a National Survey, *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* (2016). DOI: [10.1093/ntr/ntw102](https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntw102)

Provided by Georgia State University

APA citation: E-cigarettes not meeting potential as 'disruptive technology,' public health study shows (2016, May 9) retrieved 13 June 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-05-e-cigarettes-potential-disruptive-technology-georgia.html>

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