The Rise of E-cigarettes: Balancing Potential Risks and Benefits to Public Health in a Rapidly Evolving Tobacco Marketplace

Michael Dunbar, PhD
Behavioral Scientist, RAND Corporation

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Electronic nicotine delivery systems (more commonly known as e-cigarettes) are a diverse class of products. E-cigarettes are a less harmful source of nicotine than combustible cigarettes, and may hold immense potential for reducing tobacco-related disease burden – if, for example, combustible cigarette smokers switch entirely to e-cigarettes. However, the surge in e-cigarette use among young people may negatively affect public health by increasing users’ risk of progressing to using more harmful products, like cigarettes. This presentation reviews recent work in a large cohort of young people examining correlates of product use and longitudinal associations between e-cigarette and cigarette use from adolescence through young adulthood. Public health considerations surrounding poly-tobacco use in an increasingly diverse tobacco product landscape, public perceptions of different tobacco products, and the changing regulatory climate toward e-cigarettes are discussed.

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