

Original Investigation

Association of Electronic Cigarette Use With Initiation of Combustible Tobacco Product Smoking in Early Adolescence

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IMPORTANCE Exposure to nicotine in electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) is becoming increasingly common among adolescents who report never having smoked combustible tobacco.

OBJECTIVE To evaluate whether e-cigarette use among 14-year-old adolescents who have never tried combustible tobacco is associated with risk of initiating use of 3 combustible tobacco products (ie, cigarettes, cigars, and hookah).

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS Longitudinal repeated assessment of a school-based cohort at baseline (fall 2013, 9th grade, mean age = 14.1 years) and at a 6-month follow-up (spring 2014, 9th grade) and a 12-month follow-up (fall 2014, 10th grade). Ten public high schools in Los Angeles, California, were recruited through convenience sampling. Participants were students who reported never using combustible tobacco at baseline and completed follow-up assessments at 6 or 12 months (N = 2530). At each time point, students completed self-report surveys during in-classroom data collections.

EXPOSURE Student self-report of whether he or she ever used e-cigarettes (yes or no) at baseline.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND MEASURES Six- and 12-month follow-up reports on use of any of the following tobacco products within the prior 6 months: (1) any combustible tobacco product (yes or no); (2) combustible cigarettes (yes or no), (3) cigars (yes or no); (4) hookah (yes or no); and (5) number of combustible tobacco products (range: 0-3).

RESULTS Past 6-month use of any combustible tobacco product was more frequent in baseline e-cigarette ever users (n = 222) than never users (n = 2308) at the 6-month follow-up (30.7% vs 8.1%, respectively; difference between groups in prevalence rates, 22.7% [95% CI, 16.4%-28.9%]) and at the 12-month follow-up (25.2% vs 9.3%, respectively; difference between groups, 15.9% [95% CI, 10.0%-21.8%]). Baseline e-cigarette use was associated with greater likelihood of use of any combustible tobacco product averaged across the 2 follow-up periods in the unadjusted analyses (odds ratio [OR], 4.27 [95% CI, 3.19-5.71]) and in the analyses adjusted for sociodemographic, environmental, and intrapersonal risk factors for smoking (OR, 2.73 [95% CI, 2.00-3.73]). Product-specific analyses showed that baseline e-cigarette use was positively associated with combustible cigarette (OR, 2.65 [95% CI, 1.73-4.05]), cigar (OR, 4.85 [95% CI, 3.38-6.96]), and hookah (OR, 3.25 [95% CI, 2.29-4.62]) use and with the number of different combustible products used (OR, 4.26 [95% CI, 3.16-5.74]) averaged across the 2 follow-up periods.

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE Among high school students in Los Angeles, those who had ever used e-cigarettes at baseline compared with nonusers were more likely to report initiation of combustible tobacco use over the next year. Further research is needed to understand whether this association may be causal.

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Original Investigation

Progression to Traditional Cigarette Smoking After Electronic Cigarette Use Among US Adolescents and Young Adults

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← Editorial

IMPORTANCE Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) may help smokers reduce the use of traditional combustible cigarettes. However, adolescents and young adults who have never smoked traditional cigarettes are now using e-cigarettes, and these individuals may be at risk for subsequent progression to traditional cigarette smoking.

OBJECTIVE To determine whether baseline use of e-cigarettes among nonsmoking and nonsusceptible adolescents and young adults is associated with subsequent progression along an established trajectory to traditional cigarette smoking.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS In this longitudinal cohort study, a national US sample of 694 participants aged 16 to 26 years who were never cigarette smokers and were attitudinally nonsusceptible to smoking cigarettes completed baseline surveys from October 1, 2012, to May 1, 2014, regarding smoking in 2012-2013. They were reassessed 1 year later. Analysis was conducted from July 1, 2014, to March 1, 2015. Multinomial logistic regression was used to assess the independent association between baseline e-cigarette use and cigarette smoking, controlling for sex, age, race/ethnicity, maternal educational level, sensation-seeking tendency, parental cigarette smoking, and cigarette smoking among friends. Sensitivity analyses were performed, with varying approaches to missing data and recanting.

EXPOSURES Use of e-cigarettes at baseline.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND MEASURES Progression to cigarette smoking, defined using 3 specific states along a trajectory: nonsusceptible nonsmokers, susceptible nonsmokers, and smokers. Individuals who could not rule out smoking in the future were defined as susceptible.

RESULTS Among the 694 respondents, 374 (53.9%) were female and 531 (76.5%) were non-Hispanic white. At baseline, 16 participants (2.3%) used e-cigarettes. Over the 1-year follow-up, 11 of 16 e-cigarette users and 128 of 678 of those who had not used e-cigarettes (18.9%) progressed toward cigarette smoking. In the primary fully adjusted models, baseline e-cigarette use was independently associated with progression to smoking (adjusted odds ratio [AOR], 8.3; 95% CI, 1.2-58.6) and to susceptibility among nonsmokers (AOR, 8.5; 95% CI, 1.3-57.2). Sensitivity analyses showed consistent results in the level of significance and slightly larger magnitude of AORs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE In this national sample of US adolescents and young adults, use of e-cigarettes at baseline was associated with progression to traditional cigarette smoking. These findings support regulations to limit sales and decrease the appeal of e-cigarettes to adolescents and young adults.

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