



Research shows most children do not regularly use e-cigarettes

Category: [Press release](#) 12 June 2015 Cancer Research UK



Children aged 11 to 16 who have never smoked do not regularly use e-cigarettes, according to new Cancer Research UK data being presented today (Friday) at the [UK Nicotine and Smoking Cessation Conference](#) and will be published in the journal [Nicotine and Tobacco Research](#).

“Our survey is in line with others in the different parts of the UK that show this is not happening. Young people are certainly experimenting with e-cigarettes, some of which do contain nicotine. However, our data show that at the moment this experimentation is not translating into regular use.” - Professor Linda Bauld, University of Stirling.

The findings reflect [earlier research](#) which shows that regular use of e-cigarettes is extremely rare among young non-smokers.

Of the 1,205 children aged 11-16 who took part in the new UK-wide survey, 12 per cent reported that they had tried an e-cigarette. Figures for regular use were lower with two per cent reporting e-cigarette use more than monthly and one per cent more than weekly.

Regular e-cigarette use was found only in children who also smoked tobacco. Experimental e-cigarette use among non-smoking children was low at three per cent.

The Youth Tobacco Policy Survey – funded by Cancer Research UK has studied young people’s attitudes to tobacco and tobacco marketing since 1999. The survey in August and September 2014 was the first time questions on electronic cigarettes were included.

Earlier research has also shown there are around 2.6 million adults who use e-cigarettes in the UK, compared to around 10 million people who smoke tobacco cigarettes.

Professor Linda Bauld, Cancer Research UK scientist at the University of Stirling, said: “There’s a common perception that the rise we’ve seen in the use of electronic cigarettes will lead to a new generation of adults who have never smoked but are dependent on nicotine. This fear is based on the expectation that due to the appeal of the products, children who have never used tobacco will be attracted to e-cigarettes and start to use them regularly.

“Our survey is in line with others in the different parts of the UK that show this is not happening. Young people are certainly experimenting with e-cigarettes, some of which do contain nicotine. However, our data show that at the moment this experimentation is not translating into regular use.”

Alison Cox, director of cancer prevention at Cancer Research UK, said: “These data on electronic cigarette use in youth suggests that e-cigarettes are not serving as a gateway to tobacco. It’s reassuring that rates of smoking in young people are continuing to fall at a time when e-cigarette use has been rising.

“A number of questions remain about these products, and it’s important that we continue to closely monitor trends and patterns of use. This is why Cancer Research UK is investing in further research into e-cigarettes.”

ENDS

For media enquiries contact the Cancer Research UK press office on 020 3469 8300 or, out of hours, on 07050 264 059.

Notes to Editor

Youth Tobacco Policy Survey - 11-16 year olds, Aug-Sept 2014

	Prevalence of e-cigarette use in 1,205 UK teenagers
Ever use	12%
More than monthly	2%
More than weekly	1%
Ever use never smokers	3%
Regular use never smokers	0%
*regular use in never smokers was defined as 'at least monthly'	

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