

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

[ID-O#125] A Study on the Use Pattern of E-cigarettes among Research University Students in Malaysia

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Introduction: The increasing popularity of e-cigarettes is a significant global public health concern, threatening to undermine established tobacco control efforts. This issue is particularly pertinent in Malaysia, where the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health 2024 was enacted to regulate the use of e-cigarettes. However, the effectiveness of this regulation is currently hampered by unfinalized regulations, allowing the industry to market these devices with insufficient regulatory oversight.

Objective: This study was conducted to examine the usage pattern of e-cigarettes among research university students in Malaysia.

Method: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among university students using convenience sampling techniques between January and June 2023 through email invitations. This study examined e-cigarette usage patterns, including reasons for use, purchase locations, awareness of advertisements and perceptions of harm. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with SPSS version 18.

Result: The survey involved 163 e-cigarette users, with a demographic breakdown showing a greater proportion of participants being male (81.6%), Malay (65.0%) and aged between 21 to 25 years (60.7%). Approximately 65% of them were dual users and used POD e-cigarettes without refilling them (79.8%). The main reasons for using e-cigarettes were the pleasant taste (83.4%), curiosity (77.9%), social acceptability (70.6%) and enjoyment (69.3%). Most students reported obtaining information and purchasing these devices from e-cigarette shops. They perceived e-cigarettes as somewhat less harmful (41.7%) than combustible cigarettes, while 15.3% viewed them as much less harmful.

Conclusion: There is widespread use of e-cigarettes among Malaysian university students, driven by curiosity, social factors, and the perception that they are less harmful than conventional cigarettes. These results emphasize the need for strong regulations and targeted public health efforts to address the growing e-cigarette use and its associated risks.