Support for E-Cigarette Regulations that Protect Children & Adolescents

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[ABSTRACT]

Background: E-cigarette use among adolescents and liquid nicotine poisonings of children are increasing, yet e-cigarette manufacturing, advertising, sale, and use are largely unregulated. This study examines support for e-cigarette regulations.

Design: In 2014, we asked about support for various regulations related to manufacturing, advertising, sale, and use of e-cigarettes, and prohibited use in public places. Respondents were asked, “Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life?” Respondents who reported that they have smoked at least 100 cigarettes and now smoke every day or some days were categorized as current smokers, while those who reported not at all were categorized as former smokers.

RESULTS

In the RRD frame, 1,131 adults completed the survey (co-operation rate, 86.7%), and 1,288 adults on the probability-based Internet panel completed the survey (final completion rate, 100%). Weighted results are presented. Most U.S. adults supported increased e-cigarette regulations, including bans on advertising, sale, and use in commercial airplanes, whereas a weaker majority supported bans on advertising, sale, and use in public places (See Figure 1). A strong majority of adults supported increased e-cigarette regulations, including bans on advertising, sale, and use in commercial airplanes, whereas a weaker majority supported bans on advertising, sale, and use in public places (See Figure 1). Chi-square analyses revealed that support for regulations was stronger among females, more educated adults, and never e-cigarette users. Region and parental status did not relate to support.

DISCUSSION

Support is nearly universal among U.S. adults for some of the regulations that would provide these protections. FDA regulations to regulate e-cigarettes to protect public health is likely to have strong public support. Although the majority of adults supported these potential regulations, limited minorities of Americans did not support for banning e-cigarette use in indoor public places was substantially higher than support for a quarter of adults expressed opposition on this issue. Moreover, almost half of adults oppose prohibiting advertising and marketing in e-cigarettes. The medical and public health communities need to work to ensure that these products are safe and only produce a harmless water vapor.

The scientific evidence has not yet resolved the issue of whether e-cigarettes help adult smokers to quit cigarettes, but there is no public health benefit for children and adolescents using e-cigarettes. Moreover, almost half of adults oppose prohibiting advertising and marketing in e-cigarettes. The medical and public health communities need to work to ensure that these products are safe and only produce a harmless water vapor.