

Issue Overview: E-cigarettes

By Emma Orr, Bloomberg on 01.04.17

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A man smokes an e-cigarette at the V-Revolution E-Cigarette shop in Covent Garden in London, England, August 27, 2014. Photo by Dan Kitwood/Getty Images

DEFINITIONS

nicotine

An addictive drug used in both cigarettes and e-cigarettes

tobacco

A type of plant that naturally contains nicotine; its sticky leaves are dried for use in regular cigarettes

vapor

The gas form of a liquid or solid; in e-cigarettes, it is the gas form of liquid nicotine, created by heating up the liquid

Who's that behind the glowing

blue light? A smoker? Then what's he doing in the office, in restaurants, in my living room? And what's with the cigarette commercials popping up on American TV? Weren't those banned in 1970? (Yes.) Cigarettes, in modern electronic guise, are bidding for respectability again. Employers and governments are struggling to adapt to e-cigarettes, devices that deliver a hit of

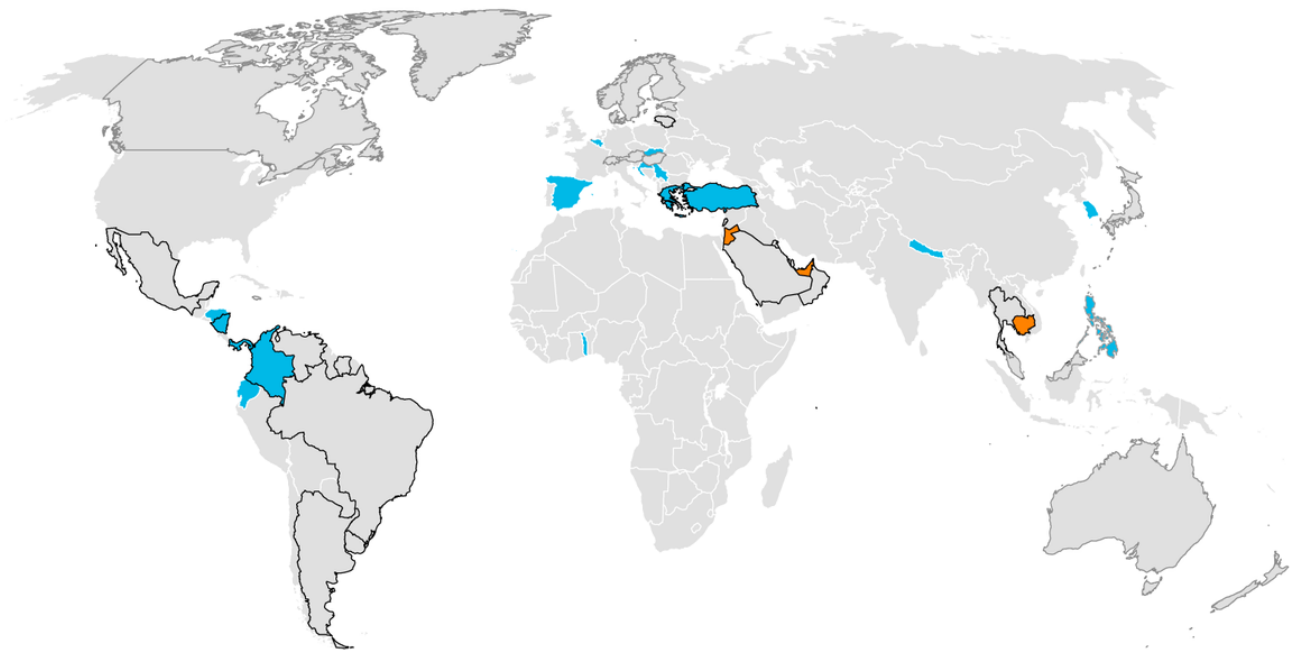
stimulating nicotine without the tobacco of the traditional burning stick. Some health advocates are pressing for curbs on e-cigarettes where they don't already exist, out of safety concerns and fear the popularity of the devices will reverse gains made in the war on smoking. Other medical specialists see e-cigarettes as the best tool yet for addicts to quit smoking, and thus as a means for accelerating that fight.

The Situation

Of about 70 countries that regulate e-cigarettes, three — Cambodia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates — ban their use altogether. Twenty-six, including Brazil, Greece and Thailand, prohibit sales. Twenty-one, such as Belgium, Honduras and the Philippines, bar their use in enclosed public spaces or public transportation, as do eight states and more than 500 municipalities and counties in the U.S. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced the first national e-cigarette regulations in mid-2016. They bar sales to minors, prohibit free samples and require nicotine-addiction warnings. A few days earlier, the European Union's Court of Justice upheld e-cigarette regulations banning advertising and limiting nicotine content. The research company Euromonitor estimated global sales of e-cigarettes and related paraphernalia at more than \$5 billion in 2015, up from \$2.8 billion in 2014. The devices are sold by big tobacco companies such as Altria and Reynolds American, as well as by specialty producers like the Miami-based V2 Cigs. Some analysts think increased costs associated with new regulations will push smaller competitors out of the market. The U.K. Royal College of Physicians warned in a 2016 report that the involvement of tobacco sellers threatens smoking-reduction efforts because their interest lies in marketing e-cigarettes as a complement to rather than a substitute for regular cigarettes.

E-Cigarette Regulations

- ☐ Sales seriously limited
- ☒ Use banned in enclosed public spaces
- ☐ Sales banned
- ☒ Use banned



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The Background

A Chinese pharmacist and smoker named Hon Lik gets credit for developing the e-cigarette in 2003. It went on sale in the U.S. and Europe in 2006, according to the E-Cigarette Forum, a website for e-cigarette smokers. E-cigarettes take many forms. They come in various colors and contain different levels of nicotine, an alkaloid present in tobacco that is addictive. Early versions looked like regular cigarettes or were housed in sleek, metallic tubes. More recent models are more like elaborate pipes. They all work the same way: A battery heats nicotine liquid that comes in flavors ranging from tobacco to bubble gum to cinnamon cookie. The puffer inhales nicotine and exhales vapor (thus the popular nickname for e-cigarette smokers: “vapers.”) There’s no burning tobacco and thus no smoke or tar.

The Argument

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is among the health groups that say e-cigarettes may be a gateway for youth to start smoking cigarettes, especially as some ads feature celebrities who make vaping look cool. A U.S. government survey of teenagers recorded a significant increase in

the use of e-cigarettes from 2011 to 2015. However, the rise was counterbalanced by a drop in the use of conventional tobacco products. The Royal College of Physicians report concluded that e-cigarettes were used in the U.K. almost exclusively by confirmed smokers to reduce the harm to themselves or others. Vaping may be as effective as nicotine patches for smokers trying to quit, according to the first physician-run trial to compare them. The practice is too new for there to be a significant body of research on long-term health ramifications. The effects on humans of nicotine without tobacco are not well-studied, although trials have shown neither an association between nicotine gum and cancer nor adverse effects from the use of nicotine patches. E-cigarette devices contain metal which can show up in vapor as particles small enough to be breathed in. The level of danger remains unclear.

Quiz

- 1 Which of the following aspects of the article is NOT thoroughly discussed?
 - (A) the reasons some groups worry e-cigarettes may lead to smoking traditional cigarettes
 - (B) the international regulation of e-cigarette sales and use
 - (C) the way e-cigarettes and traditional cigarettes deliver nicotine to the consumer
 - (D) the potential advantages and risks of using e-cigarettes

- 2 Which of the following sentences from the section "The Argument" demonstrates a potential health risk associated with e-cigarettes?
 - (A) A U.S. government survey of teenagers recorded a significant increase in the use of e-cigarettes from 2011 to 2015.
 - (B) Vaping may be as effective as nicotine patches for smokers trying to quit, according to the first physician-run trial to compare them.
 - (C) The practice is too new for there to be a significant body of research on long-term health ramifications.
 - (D) E-cigarette devices contain metal which can show up in vapor as particles small enough to be breathed in.

- 3 One central idea of the article is that e-cigarettes may help people who want to quit smoking traditional cigarettes.

Which of the following selections from the article BEST supports this idea?

 - (A) Employers and governments are struggling to adapt to e-cigarettes, devices that deliver a hit of stimulating nicotine without the tobacco of the traditional burning stick.
 - (B) A few days earlier, the European Union's Court of Justice upheld e-cigarette regulations banning advertising and limiting nicotine content.
 - (C) The puffer inhales nicotine and exhales vapor (thus the popular nickname for e-cigarette smokers: "vapers.") There's no burning tobacco and thus no smoke or tar.
 - (D) The Royal College of Physicians report concluded that e-cigarettes were used in the U.K. almost exclusively by confirmed smokers to reduce the harm to themselves or others.

- 4 Which option provides an accurate and objective summary of the article?
- (A) Health experts have studied the risks and benefits associated with e-cigarettes, and they agree that vaping e-cigarettes is a safer option than smoking traditional cigarettes. However, bans and restrictions on e-cigarettes are more stringent than regulations on traditional cigarettes.
 - (B) E-cigarettes have appeared recently in places where traditional cigarettes have been banned, and are growing more popular. While many countries have begun to study and regulate their use, and some point out there is no burning smoke or tar, the risks associated with e-cigarettes are still largely unknown.
 - (C) The popularity of e-cigarettes has increased at an alarming rate, rightfully causing concern among physicians. Although thorough studies have not yet been completed on the effects of e-cigarette use, many countries have regulated them, and more should begin to do so.
 - (D) Because many e-cigarettes are sold by tobacco companies, their claim to help smokers quit can be considered a marketing tactic. Cigarette companies are willing to go to great lengths to return to the kind of business they had before regulations and bans on TV ads began in the 1970s.