

E-cigarette advertisements, and associations with the use of e-cigarettes and disapproval or quitting smoking: Findings from the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Netherlands Survey

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Abstract

Background: Much attention has been directed towards the possible effects of e-cigarette advertisements on adolescent never smokers. However, e-cigarette advertising may also influence perceptions and behaviors of adult smokers. The aim of our study was to examine whether noticing e-cigarette advertisements is associated with current use of e-cigarettes, disapproval of smoking, quit smoking attempts, and quit smoking success.

Methods: We used longitudinal data from two survey waves of the ITC Netherlands Survey among smokers aged 16 years and older ($n = 1198$). Respondents were asked whether they noticed e-cigarettes being advertised on television, on the radio, and in newspapers or magazines in the previous 6 months.

Results: There was a significant increase in noticing e-cigarette advertisements between 2013 (13.3%) and 2014 (36.0%), across all media. The largest increase was for television advertisements. There was also a substantial increase in current use of e-cigarettes (from 3.1% to 13.3%), but this was not related to noticing advertisements in traditional media ($OR = 0.99$, $p = 0.937$). Noticing advertisements was bivariately associated with more disapproval of smoking ($Beta = 0.05$, $p = 0.019$) and with a higher likelihood of attempting to quit smoking ($OR = 1.37$, $p = 0.038$), but these associations did not reach significance in multivariate analyses. There was no significant association between noticing advertisements and quit smoking success in either the bivariate or multivariate regression analysis ($OR = 0.92$, $p = 0.807$).

Conclusion: Noticing e-cigarette advertisements increased sharply in the Netherlands between 2013 and 2014 along with increased e-cigarette use, but the two appear unrelated. The advertisements did not seem to have adverse effects on disapproval of smoking and smoking cessation.

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