

Differences in norms towards the use of nicotine vaping products among adult smokers, former smokers and nicotine vaping product users: cross - sectional findings from the 2016 ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey

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Abstract

Aims: To examine whether norms towards nicotine vaping product (NVP) use varied between Australia, Canada, England and the United States and by socio-demographics, smoking and NVP status.

Design: Cross-sectional data from the 2016 ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey.

Setting: Four countries with distinct regulatory policies relating to the sale and advertising of NVPs: Australia (most restrictive), Canada (restrictive), England and the United States (least restrictive).

Participants: A total of 10900 adult (age 18+) current smokers, former smokers, or at least weekly NVP users. Respondents were from Australia (n = 1366), Canada (n = 3309), England (n = 3835) and the United States (n = 2390).

Measurements: Questions permitted the categorization of respondents as current smokers, former smokers, NVP users and socio-demographic categories (sex, age, country, ethnicity, income and education). Further questions were asked regarding the frequency of exposure to NVPs in public, whether they had a partner or close friends who vaped and whether they believed society or those considered important to them approved of NVPs.

Findings: Adjusting for relevant covariates, compared with Australian respondents, those in England, Canada and the United States were more likely to report frequent exposure to NVPs in public (83.1%, 57.3% and 48.3%, respectively, compared to 19.8% in Australia; $P < 0.0001$), having a partner who vaped (13.8%, 7.1% and 7.7%, respectively, compared to 2.1% in Australia; $P < 0.0001$) and having close friend(s) who vaped (31.7%, 25.3%, 20.9%, respectively, compared to 10.0% in Australia; $P < 0.0001$). Compared with Australian respondents, respondents from England were more likely to report that society (27.6% compared to 12.3% in Australia; $P < 0.0001$) and people important to them approved of NVP use (28.9% compared to 14.3% in Australia; $P < 0.0001$).

Conclusions: Norms towards nicotine vaping product (NVP) use appear to vary among countries with different regulatory contexts regarding sales and advertising.

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