

# The Illegal Experimental Tobacco Marketplace II: Effects of vaping product bans - findings from the 2020 International Tobacco Control Project

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## **Abstract**

**Significance:** Restrictive e-cigarette policies may increase purchases from illegal sources. The Illegal Experimental Tobacco Marketplace (IETM) allows examination of how restrictions impact illegal purchases. We investigated (1) the effect of a vaping ban, total flavour vaping ban and partial flavour vaping ban on the probability of purchasing illegal vaping products among different regulatory environments (USA, Canada and England) and tobacco user types (cigarette smokers, dual users and e-cigarette users); and (2) the relation between ban endorsement and illegal purchases.

**Methods:** Participants (N=459) from the International Tobacco Control Survey rated their support of bans and chose to purchase from a hypothetical legal experimental tobacco marketplace or IETM under control and the three ban conditions.

**Results:** In total, 25% of cigarette smokers, 67% of dual users and 79% of e-cigarette users made IETM purchases. Cross-country comparisons depicted dual users from Canada (OR: 19.8), and e-cigarette users from the USA (OR: 12.9) exhibited higher illegal purchases odds than the same user type in England. Within-country comparisons showed e-cigarette and dual users are more likely to purchase from the IETM than cigarette smokers in the most restrictive condition, with the largest effects in e-cigarette users (England-OR: 1722.6, USA-OR: 22725.3, Canada-OR: 6125.0). Increased opposition towards partial or total flavour ban was associated with increased IETM purchasing in the corresponding condition.

**Conclusions:** Vaping restrictions may shift users' preference to the illegal marketplace in a regulatory environment. Evidence of the IETM generalisability in a geographically dispersed sample enhances its utility in tobacco regulatory science.

## **Recommended Citation**

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