

Changes in smoking and vaping over 18 months among smokers and recent ex-smokers: Longitudinal findings from the 2016 and 2018 ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Surveys

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Abstract

This descriptive study of smokers (smoked at least monthly) and recent ex-smokers (quit for ≥ 2 years) examined transitions over an 18 month period in their smoking and vaping behaviors. Data are from Waves 1 (W1: 2016) and 2 (W2: 2018) of the ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey, a cohort study of adult (≥ 18) smokers, concurrent users (smoke and vape), and recent ex-smokers from Australia, Canada, England, and the United States (US). Respondents ($N = 5016$) were classified according to their smoking and vaping status, which resulted in eight subgroups: (1) exclusive daily smokers (2) exclusive non-daily smokers; (3-6) concurrent users (subdivided into four groups by each combination of daily/non-daily smoking and daily/non-daily vaping); (7) ex-smokers who vape; (8) ex-smokers not vaping. The analyses focused first on describing changes between groups from W1 to W2. Second, transition outcomes were assessed based on changes in smoking and vaping between W1 and W2. Transitions focused on smoking were: no change in smoking (continued smoking at the same frequency); decreased smoking; increased smoking; discontinued smoking; relapsed (ex-smokers at W1 who were smoking at W2). Transitions focused on vaping were: initiated vaping; switched from smoking to vaping. Overall, this study found that the vast majority of smokers were smoking 18 months later. Non-daily smokers were more likely than daily smokers to have discontinued smoking ($p < 0.0001$) and to have switched to exclusive vaping ($p = 0.034$). Exclusive non-daily smokers were more likely than exclusive daily smokers to have initiated vaping ($p = 0.04$). Among all W1 daily smokers, there were no differences in discontinued smoking between daily smokers who vaped (concurrent users) and exclusive daily smokers; however, concurrent users were more likely than exclusive daily smokers to have decreased to non-daily smoking ($p < 0.001$) or to have switched to vaping by W2 ($p < 0.001$). Among all W1 non-daily smokers, there were no significant differences in increased smoking or discontinued smoking between concurrent users or exclusive smokers. Most ex-smokers remained abstinent from smoking, and there was no difference in relapse back to smoking between those who vaped and those who did not.

Recommended Citation

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