E-cigarette flavors, devices and brands used by youths before and after partial flavor restrictions in the US: Canada, England, and the US, 2017-2020


Abstract

Objectives. To examine the impact of US restrictions implemented in February 2020 prohibiting flavors other than menthol and tobacco in cartridge-based e-cigarettes. Methods. We analyzed 5 cross-sectional waves of the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project Youth Tobacco and Vaping Surveys, conducted online with youths aged 16 to 19 years in the United States, Canada, and England, for differences in usual e-cigarette flavor, device, and brand reported by past-30-day vapers (n = 9512) before (2017, 2018, 2019), during (February 2020), and after (August 2020) implementation of US flavor restrictions. Results. In August 2020, 78.7% of vapers in the United States reported using a flavor prohibited in cartridges or pods, versus 86.3% in Canada (adjusted odds ratio [AOR] = 1.73; 95% CI = 1.25, 1.40) and 79.8% in England (AOR = 1.10; 95% CI = 0.78, 1.55). Disposable e-cigarettes (exempt from flavor restrictions) increased to a greater extent among vapers in the United States (13.2% to 36.8%) versus Canada (7.7% to 14.2%; AOR = 2.01; 95% CI = 1.33, 3.04) and England (10.8% to 16.4%; AOR = 2.33; 95% CI = 1.52, 3.57). Puff Bar (disposable) emerged as the most popular brand in the United States. Conclusions. Usual flavors used by youth vapers in the United States were unchanged after 2020 restrictions on cartridge-based e-cigarettes. Youths used brands and devices exempt from the restrictions.

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