

The prevalence and characteristics of e-cigarette users in the U.S.

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Abstract

Studies have examined the characteristics of individuals who use e-cigarettes, including sociodemographic and smoking characteristics, and the relationship of e-cigarette use to tobacco control policies. While most studies consider a subset of these characteristics with weak measures of regular e-cigarette use, this study uses a large, recent U.S. survey to simultaneously consider the association of each of these factors with different use measures. Data from the May 2014 Tobacco Use Supplement-Current Population Survey is supplemented with information on tobacco control policies. The prevalence of ever, current (at least 1 of the last 30 days), and regular (at least 20 of the last 30 days) e-cigarette use were 7.7%, 2.1% and 0.9%, implying that 27.0% of ever users were current users of which 45.3% were regular users. E-cigarette use varied by socio-demographic characteristics and by smoking status, and depended on the measure of use adopted. However, regardless of measures, e-cigarette use was higher among those smokers who smoked more cigarettes. The association with policies was generally weak, but we found more regular use by smokers in low tax and low tobacco control spending states. The results indicate that the user characteristics differ depending on the e-cigarette use measure. The measure of use should be carefully considered in analyzing how e-cigarette use affects cigarette use.

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