

Social norms for e-cigarettes and smoking: Associations with initiation of e-cigarette use, intentions to quit smoking and quit attempts: Findings from the EUREST-PLUS ITC Europe Surveys

McDermott, M., East, K., Hitchman, S.C., McNeill, A., Tountas, Y., Demjén, T., Fernández, E., Mons, U., Trofor, A.C., Herbec, A., Janik-Koncewicz, K., Fong, G.T., & Vardavas, C.I.

Abstract

Background: Social norms have received little attention in relation to electronic cigarettes (EC). The current study examine social norms for EC use and smoking tobacco, and their associations with (i) initiation of EC use, (ii) intention to quit smoking and (iii) attempts to quit smoking. **Methods:** Cross-sectional and longitudinal data analysis from Waves 1 and 2 of the ITC 6 European Country Survey and corresponding waves from England (the ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey). Current smokers at baseline, who heard of ECs and provided data at both waves were included (n = 3702). Complex samples logistic regression examined associations between the outcomes and descriptive (seeing EC use in public, close friends using ECs/smoking) and injunctive (public approves of ECs/smoking) norms, adjusting for country, demographics, EC use and heaviness of smoking. **Results:** In longitudinal analyses, seeing EC use in public at least some days was the only social norm that predicted initiation of EC use between waves (OR = 1.66, 95%CI = 1.08–2.56). In the cross-sectional analysis, having an intention to quit was associated with seeing EC use in public (OR = 1.37, 95%CI = 1.04–1.81) and reporting fewer than three close friends smoke (OR = 0.59, 95%CI = 0.44–0.80). There was no association between any social norm and making a quit attempt between waves. **Conclusions:** Initiation of EC use is predicted by seeing EC use in public, which was also associated with greater intention to quit smoking. Friends' smoking was associated with lower intention to quit. These findings may allay concerns that increased visibility of ECs is renormalizing smoking amongst current smokers.

Recommended Citation

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