



Policy and Practice Brief

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Our most recent paper using the follow-up surveys is about using *e-cigarettes* (often known as vaping).

E-cigarettes

Clinicians and health promotion staff working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers need to be prepared to discuss e-cigarettes with their patients. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers have used e-cigarettes. These numbers will probably increase further. Use of e-cigarettes was associated with wanting to quit and past use of other cessation aids, so may be an indicator of interest in quitting. Discussion of e-cigarettes may be an opportunity to reinforce other cessation assistance. Using e-cigarettes may help smokers quit, but there are competing concerns about the health risks of e-cigarettes and their potential to re-normalise smoking.

We found considerable misunderstanding about the relative harm of e-cigarettes compared to conventional cigarettes. It is accepted that e-cigarettes are much less harmful, although not risk-free, but the magnitude of the difference remains contested.

Most advertising of e-cigarettes is banned in Australia. E-cigarettes containing nicotine cannot be legally sold or used, and the sale of the devices is banned in one state. Most Australian smokers who have ever used e-cigarettes have only used them once or twice.



Other news

Minister Ken Wyatt announced \$184m to continue the Tackling Indigenous Smoking program for four more years until 2022. Talking about the Smokes provides rigorous research evidence for managers and staff working in regional Tackling Indigenous Smoking teams about what is working to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers to quit.

Key findings



We examined both our Talking About The Smokes (TATS) results from the 1301 smokers surveyed between August 2013 and August 2014 and results from 1093 Australian smokers surveyed between February and May 2013 for Wave 9 of the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project.

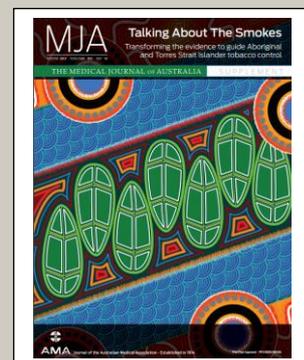
- Fewer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander than all Australian smokers had tried an e-cigarette (21% vs 30%).
- More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers had not heard of e-cigarettes (38% vs 23%).
- Fewer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers than all Australian smokers agreed that e-cigarettes are less harmful than conventional cigarettes (22% vs 50%).

For more information

- Thomas DP, Lusic N, van der Sterren A, Borland R. Electronic cigarette use and understanding among a national sample of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Islander smokers. *Nicotine Tob Res.* Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/ntr/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ntr/nty154/5056115>

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The series of 15 baseline papers is available at:
<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2015/202/10/supplement>



Talking about the Smokes is a national research project led by a partnership between Menzies School of Health Research, NACCHO and all its Affiliates, University of Melbourne, and Cancer Council Victoria, together with 34 ACCHSs and the Torres Shire Council. It is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.