

# Cigarette brands with flavor capsules in the filter: Trends in the use and brand perceptions among smokers in the United States, Mexico, and Australia, 2012-2014

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## **Abstract**

**Objective:** To describe trends, correlates of use and consumer perceptions related to the product design innovation of flavour capsules in cigarette filters.

**Methods:** Quarterly surveys from 2012 to 2014 were analysed from an online consumer panel of adult smokers aged 18–64, living in the USA (n=6865 observations; 4154 individuals); Mexico (n=5723 observations; 3366 individuals); and Australia (n=5864 observations; 2710 individuals). Preferred brand varieties were classified by price (ie, premium; discount) and flavour (ie, regular; flavoured without capsule; flavoured with capsule). Participants reported their preferred brand variety's appeal (ie, satisfaction; stylishness), taste (ie, smoothness, intensity), and harm relative to other brands and varieties. GEE models were used to determine time trends and correlates of flavour capsule use, as well as associations between preferred brand characteristics (ie, price stratum, flavour) and perceptions of relative appeal, taste and harm.

**Results:** Preference for flavour capsules increased significantly in Mexico (6% to 14%) and Australia (1% to 3%), but not in the USA (4% to 5%). 18–24 year olds were most likely to prefer capsules in the USA (10%) and Australia (4%), but not Mexico. When compared to smokers who preferred regular brands, smokers who preferred brands with capsules viewed their variety of cigarettes as having more positive appeal (all countries), better taste (all countries), and lesser risk (Mexico, USA) than other brand varieties.

**Conclusions:** Results indicate that use of cigarettes with flavour capsules is growing, is associated with misperceptions of relative harm, and differentiates brands in ways that justify regulatory action.

## **Recommended Citation**

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