

Youth and young adult exposure to and perceptions of news media coverage about e-cigarettes in the United States, Canada and England

Wackowski, O, Sontag, J, & Hammond, D.

Abstract

News media coverage has the potential to shape awareness and perceptions of e-cigarettes, but little is known about youth and young adult exposure to e-cigarette news. We analyzed news exposure measures on Wave 1 of the ITC Youth Tobacco and E-cigarette Survey, conducted in Canada, England, and the U.S. Web-based surveys were completed by 16-19-year-olds in July/August 2017 (n = 12,064). The prevalence of exposure to e-cigarette news and its perceived valence is provided. Logistic regression was used to model the odds of news exposure, and the association between news exposure and e-cigarette harm perceptions, susceptibility, and quitting intentions. Overall, 17.1% of young people reported hearing or seeing e-cigarette news at least 'sometimes' in the past 30 days. The majority of those exposed (n = 2052) perceived the content of the news stories to be mostly negative (35.7%) or mixed (34.8%) about e-cigarettes, versus mostly positive (19%). Perceived exposure to mostly negative e-cigarette stories was lower among past 30-day e-cigarette users and youth in England. Participants exposed to mostly negative e-cigarette news were more likely to perceive that e-cigarettes cause at least some harm and, among past 30 day users, have intentions to quit e-cigarettes in the next month. Exposure to mostly positive news was associated with higher odds of e-cigarette susceptibility among never triers. Young people report exposure to e-cigarette news with varied perceptions of its valence. E-cigarette news exposure may shape e-cigarette harm perceptions and use intentions, as well as reflect existing beliefs and product interest.

Recommended Citation

Wackowski, O, Sontag, J, Hammond, D. (2019). Youth and young adult exposure to and perceptions of news media coverage about e-cigarettes in the United States, Canada and England. *Preventative Medicine*, 121, 7-10.

Link To PDF: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30731093/>