

Reasons for regularly using heated tobacco products among adults current and former smokers in Japan: Findings from 2018 ITC Japan Survey

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Abstract

The market growth of heated tobacco products (HTPs), such as IQOS, Ploom TECH, and glo, has increased dramatically in Japan since 2016. Little is known about the reasons why current and former smokers are using HTPs. The data for this cross-sectional study were from the 2018 (Wave 1) International Tobacco Control (ITC) Japan Survey, a national web-based survey of 4500 people, including 658 current HTP users, of whom 549 were concurrently smoking cigarettes and 109 were former smokers. The most common reasons for regularly using HTPs were: beliefs that HTP are less harmful than cigarettes to themselves (90.6%) or to others (86.7%), enjoyment (76.5%), and social acceptability (74.4%). About half of current smokers (55.1%) reported using HTPs because these products might help them quit smoking. However, a near-equal percentage (52.0%) of current smokers reported using HTPs to replace some of the cigarettes they smoked so that they did not have to give up smoking altogether. If smokers are using HTPs to complement rather than quit their smoking, then the harm reduction potential of HTPs suggested by the toxicity studies will be diminished.

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