

Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems: International Tobacco Control Four-Country Survey

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Abstract

Background: Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) initially emerged in 2003 and have since become widely available globally, particularly over the Internet.

Purpose: Data on ENDS usage patterns are limited. The current paper examines patterns of ENDS awareness, use, and product-associated beliefs among current and former smokers in four countries.

Methods: Data come from Wave 8 of the International Tobacco Control Four-Country Survey, collected July 2010 to June 2011 and analyzed through June 2012. Respondents included 5939 current and former smokers in Canada ($n=1581$); the U.S. ($n=1520$); the United Kingdom (UK; $n=1325$); and Australia ($n=1513$).

Results: Overall, 46.6% were aware of ENDS (U.S.: 73%, UK: 54%, Canada: 40%, Australia: 20%); 7.6% had tried ENDS (16% of those aware of ENDS); and 2.9% were current users (39% of triers). Awareness of ENDS was higher among younger, non-minority smokers with higher incomes who were heavier smokers. Prevalence of trying ENDS was higher among younger, nondaily smokers with a high income and among those who perceived ENDS as less harmful than traditional cigarettes. Current use was higher among both nondaily and heavy (≥ 20 cigarettes per day) smokers. In all, 79.8% reported using ENDS because they were considered less harmful than traditional cigarettes; 75.4% stated that they used ENDS to help them reduce their smoking; and 85.1% reported using ENDS to help them quit smoking.

Conclusions: Awareness of ENDS is high, especially in countries where they are legal (i.e., the U.S. and UK). Because trial was associated with nondaily smoking and a desire to quit smoking, ENDS may have the potential to serve as a cessation aid.

Recommended Citation:

Adkison, S. E., O'Connor, R. J., Bansal-Travers, M., Hyland, A., Borland, R., Yong, H. H., Cummings, K. M., McNeill, A., Thrasher, J. F., Hammond, D., & Fong, G. T. (2013). Electronic nicotine delivery systems: International Tobacco Control Four-Country Survey. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 44(3), 207-215. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2012.10.018; 10.1016/j.amepre.2012.10.018

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