

Prevalence and characteristics of e-cigarette users among the current smokers and ex-smokers population in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Data are limited on the extent and characteristics of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) use among smokers and ex-smokers. The objectives of the study were to determine the prevalence of e-cigarette use, socio-demographic and smoking characteristics associated with current e-cigarette use among smokers and ex-smokers population in Malaysia. **METHODS:** This was an analysis of secondary data from a cross-sectional national population based e-cigarette study conducted in May and June 2016 throughout Malaysia. The details description of the sampling methods was described in National E-cigarette Survey (NECS) 2016 report. Briefly, data were obtained from the 1396 ever smokers i.e., 957 (68.6%) current smokers and 439 (31.4%) ex-smokers from this survey. **RESULTS:** Current e-cigarette use was found predominantly among current smokers (8.0%) as compared with ex-smokers (4.3%). Among current smokers, the reason for smoking e-cigarette was mainly wanting to try (44.7%), followed by intention to quit tobacco smoking (15.8%), to reduce tobacco smoking (10.5%), to replace tobacco smoking (7.9%) and to reduce cost of smoking (6.6%). There was no significant difference between the 2 groups in term of reasons for initiating e-cigarette. By using multiple logistic regressions analysis, we found that among current smokers, current e-cigarette users were more likely to be younger i.e., 18-44 years (aOR 4.83, 95%CI 1.97-11.86, p=0.001), urban residents (aOR 1.89, 95%CI 1.15-3.11, p=0.012), single/ divorced/ widowed (aOR 2.11, 95%CI 1.24-3.61, p=0.006) and student (aOR 2.25, 95%CI 1.01-5.01, p=0.048). **DISCUSSION:** and **CONCLUSION:** This study showed that the current use of e-cigarette was higher among current smokers. Reason for initiating e-cigarette among current smokers was mainly wanting to try. E-cigarette use appear to be common among current smokers who are younger, urban residents, single/divorced/widowed and student. Therefore, e-cigarette cessation intervention strategies and policy should target at these high prevalence groups.

KEY WORDS:

e-cigarette, current smokers, ex-smokers, Malaysia