

Letter to the Editor

Tobacco Harm Reduction

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Tobacco smoking is a pandemic that poses substantial health burdens and costs. It is the single most important cause of premature mortality in the world, mainly from lung cancer, coronary heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and stroke. The key to reducing the health burden of tobacco is to encourage cessation among smokers. However, conventional smoking cessation require nicotine addicted smokers to abstain from tobacco and nicotine entirely. Many smokers are unable or unwilling to achieve the goal.

In effect, the status quo in smoking cessation presents a third choice for tobacco harm reduction, involving the use of alternative sources of nicotine, including modern smokeless tobacco products like the electronic cigarettes which might be the most promising product for tobacco harm reduction to date, because, besides delivering nicotine vapor or aerosol without the combustion products that are responsible for smoking's damaging effect. Hence it is likely that smokers who switch to E-cigs especially the heat-not-burn product will achieve large health gains with safety and effectiveness of the product as a long-term substitute for smoking.