

Reasons for Using Electronic Cigarettes in 2016 and 2019 in Australia: A Repeated Cross-sectional Study

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Introduction and Aims: *Since the retail sale of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) containing nicotine is illegal unless approved as therapeutic purpose, the prevalence of lifetime and current use of e-cigarettes remained low, but increased among the population aged 14 and over from 2016 to 2019 in Australia.*

Design and Methods: *Adults who smoked in the past year and reported e-cigarette use were selected from two large nationally representative triennial cross-sectional surveys in 2016 and 2019. Trends in reasons of e-cigarette use, and the association between participant characteristics and stated reasons to use e-cigarettes were examined using multivariable logistic regression.*

Key Findings: *Among past-year smokers, the most commonly nominated reasons to use e-cigarette was 'Out of curiosity' in 2016 (46.4%) and 'To help me quit smoking' in 2019 (45.4%). The proportions of four reasons to use e-cigarettes (cutting down smoking, lower cost, better taste, or more acceptability than regular cigarettes) significantly increased from 2016 to 2019 (p for trend ≤ 0.001). In particular, among smokers who switched from cigarettes to e-cigarettes or used both products, the percentage reporting lower cost as a reason to vape was the only reason that increased over the period (p for trend < 0.05). Living in major cities or vaping currently and more frequently were associated with reporting the cost as the reason to vape in the sample.*

Discussions and Conclusions: *While e-cigarette use was a way to assist quitting or reduce smoking among some smokers, lower cost, better taste and acceptability of e-cigarettes also attracted smokers to try these products.*

Implications for Practice or Policy: *Smokers used e-cigarettes not only as a part of smoking cessation activities, but as an alternative cheaper partial or full replacement for cigarettes. Hence, the price difference between traditional cigarettes and e-cigarettes should be monitored in Australia.*

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