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E-cigarette use rose rapidly in UK, France - European study

Gabor Kovacs of 'smoke no smoke' puffs on an e-cigarette that his shop sells at Camden in London June 9, 20XX. REUTERS/Toby Melville

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The number of people in France and Britain who have tried an electronic or e-cigarette has risen sharply in just two years, according to a Europe-wide study published on Tuesday.

The research, led by scientists at Britain's Imperial College London, looked at attitudes to and use of e-cigarettes across Europe between 20xx and 20xx.

It found that France had the highest use of e-cigarettes, with the proportion of those who had tried one nearly tripling to 21.3 percent from 7.3 percent.

In the UK the figure rose from 8.9 percent in 2012 to 15.5 percent in 20xx - higher than the European average.

Using data from more than 53,000 people across Europe - with at least 1,000 from each country- the study also found the proportion of people across Europe who consider e-cigarettes dangerous nearly doubled to 51 percent from 27 percent.

E-cigarettes are metal tubes that heat liquids typically laced with nicotine and deliver vapour when inhaled. The liquids come in thousands of flavours, from cotton candy to pizza.

Use of the devices has grown quickly in the last decade, with U.S. sales expected to reach $4.1 billion (£2.8 billion) in 20xx, according to Wells Fargo Securities.

Experts fiercely debate whether the devices can help people give up smoking and whether they are safe - with some studies raising concerns about the toxicity of some of the ingredients.

"This research shows e-cigarettes are becoming very popular across Europe - with more than one in ten people in Europe now having tried one," said Filippos Filippidis, who led the European study and published it in the BMJ journal Tobacco Control.