American Heart Association’s e-Cigarette Policy Sheds Light on Additional Caution to Take When Using Them to Quit Smoking



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With the increasing popularity of electronic cigarettes, more and more smokers are using them as a means to quit smoking. However, the American Heart Association has a special story to tell, recommending their use as a cessation device only as last option, and only with great caution.

After releasing the first policy statement in electronic cigarettes, Elliott Antman, MD, President of AHA underscored the necessity of using electronic cigarettes with caution, which was enough to raise media eyebrows.

According to Antman it is necessary that health care professionals, while counseling for tobacco quitting programs with addicts, should always prioritize only the proven and approved smoking cessation options. Furthermore, Antman also stated that if this does not work then patients should be elaborately conveyed about the inadequate regulations and inconsistent safety of electronic cigarettes. This is because no electronic cigarette buyer is always aware what he or she is getting in that product.

Having done this primarily, and after making sure that the patient has understood the risks and side effects associated with electronic cigarettes, only then they can prefer whether to use or not to use electronic cigarettes to quit smoking. Additionally, Antman commented that while using e-cigarettes patients should assume a timeframe or specific date during which he or she could be free from all tobacco products. These guidelines were offered as the AHA is planning to restrict the use of e-cigarettes as well the combustible tobacco at one time.

Antman, describing the major points in the revised policy, stated that henceforward e-cigarettes would be treated and regulated with the same norms applicable for other tobacco products. Since health ailments caused by e-cigarettes are not fully known, and are capable of causing nicotine addiction, their sale to minors should be strictly banned. Antman further said by regulating e-cigarettes like conventional tobacco products AHA is taking precautions to protect younger generation of America from getting addicted to deadly tobacco products.

For years, American Heart Association has been aggressively fighting against the use of tobacco. By releasing the first policy statement on battery operated electronic cigarettes to some extent they have succeeded in restricting the autonomous use of e-cigarettes. After enough studies and after analyzing even the slightest facts and information on e-cigarettes a group of elite scientists, researchers and physicians together have compiled this statement.

A serious problem discovered by this study was the utter lack of coordination between scientific research and regulation when use of e-cigarettes was increasing in demand. This might be the reason why e-cigarettes introduced for the first time in China in 2003 are now produced by more than 465 brands in more than 7760 flavors.

As per the policy statement, still much research and study is needed on e-cigarettes to analyze and understand its impact on human health. Although researchers continue conducting studies, the designs and additives in e-cigarettes keep on changing frequently further complicating the matter. Through new policies, it is encouraged that firm guidelines and restrictions should be imposed on e-cigarettes, as well as its marketing and sales initiatives to minors.

As of now, most e-cigarettes contain liquid nicotine and flavors like bubblegum, mint, caramel, chocolate, introduced recently, are capable of luring a much younger demographic. To further appeal, these candy-like flavors alongside elegant packaging serve as the key marketing tools for the e-cigarette movement. The greatest concern today is the advertising loophole e-cigarette companies have been capitalizing on irrespective of the combustible cigarette-advertising ban from 1971.

A survey held in 2012, in which students from 6th to 12th grade participated; revealed some shocking results. According to this survey, more than 1.78 million students in United States have already tried e-cigarettes, and among this group, about 76.3 percent of students had tried conventional combustible cigarettes.

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Cigarettes have been one of the major causes behind preventable death in US. Cigarette smoking kills nearly 500,000 people every year, and around 16 million Americans suffer from health ailments caused by tobacco smoking. To put it in perspective, an estimated 20 million Americans (US) have died from a cigarette-smoking lifestyle over the past 50 years.

Each of this death could have been prevented. This is the reason AHA and other similar health related organizations are advocating against use and sale of tobacco products. According to Antman “Increasing popularity of e-cigarettes in near future, should not make us loose our ground in efforts to make America 100 percent tobacco free nation”.