The Effects of Vaping

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***Topic:***

Are the advantages of vaping as a means to quit smoking diminished by the number of individuals more willing to take up e-smoking *because* of these advantages?

***Questions:***

1. How many individuals claim to have quit smoking with the help of a vape or electronic cigarette?
2. How many more individuals state they “vape” as opposed to how many individuals smoked prior to the rise of e-cigarettes? Has the number of smokers/vapers increased since the introduction of vaping?
3. How many individuals have become addicted to nicotine through vaping?
4. How likely is one to develop lung cancer from smoking as opposed to from vaping?
5. How difficult is it to quit smoking in comparison to the difficulty of quitting vaping?
6. Are there other forms of assistance that might be more beneficial to health than vaping? Are they as effective?
7. Why do individuals take up vaping if it is as or similarly addicting as smoking?

The Effects of Vaping

Smoking and its effects have been a topic of debate in the United States (and the World) for many years. Back in the day, smoking was done everywhere and by mostly everyone it seemed as the media portrayed smoking as a statement. Marketing and advertising in the 30s, 40s, and 50s even included health claims such as being gentle on one’s throat or even that they could aid digestion. It wasn’t until nearly the mid 60s that people started to become informed on the effects on one’s health that accompanied smoking due to the Surgeon General’s report. Since then, people have continued to educate themselves on the effects of smoking and have also resorted to alternatives in order to assist them with quitting their addiction. Electronic cigarettes entered the market in about 2007 and many have switched over to these with many others taking up e-smoking since it was deemed safer than smoking. The question now is if vapes are more effective in helping smokers quit or if they are more likely to entice non-smokers to take up vaping due to it not being as risky to one’s health.

Due to these health warnings by the Surgeon General as well as individuals researching more on their own, it is now more common for individuals to vape nicotine than smoke cigarettes. In 2021, “among people aged 12 and older, 15.6% (or about 43.6 million people) reported smoking **cigarettes** in the past 30 days and 4.7% (or about 13.2 million people) reported **vaping nicotine** in the past 30 days” (Tobacco, Nicotine, and E-Cigarettes Research Report, 2022). The data presented makes it all that much more worrisome since it seems that smoking of both kinds is still very popular specifically among the younger generations. The numbers show that vaping is most popular among younger individuals (ages 12-17) due to the taste, ease of access, convenience and as we saw in the past, the media.

A graph of different colored bars

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

(National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2021)

Although the research since the 60s shows that smoking cigarettes has decreased over time and that it will continue to do so since it is the older generation that continues to mostly smoke cigarettes, it is clear that the introduction of vapes into the market leads to the potential addiction for the younger generations.

The issue is not only that vapes are creating addictions in individuals but also that while they are safer than smoking, they are still not considered safe and can still create an addiction to nicotine. “There has been an outbreak of lung injuries and deaths associated with vaping. In February 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed 2,807 cases of e-cigarette or vaping use-associated lung injury (EVALI) and 68 deaths attributed to that condition” (Blaha, n.d.). The popularity of vaping continues to gradually increase as shown by the graph below from Google Trends regardless of these facts in a similar way that the popularity of cigarettes worked all those years back. Individuals should continue researching before they start vaping and risk addiction and potentially their health as well.

A graph on a white background

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(Google Trends, 2023)

In conclusion, nicotine addiction is still very possible with vaping. While vaping seems to be the “healthier” option of the two, there are still health risks associated with vaping and electronic cigarettes. The reality is that vaping is drawing in the younger generation at a rapid rate and since it is still fairly new, we do not know all the effects that vaping might have on the body over prolonged periods of time. It is important that we listen to medical research and professionals and take their warnings seriously instead of taking all the information from the media as people did with smoking decades ago.

References:

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