

Electronic Cigarettes

From History to Evidence-Based Medicine

Thanks are due to Maziak¹ for providing us evidence that we must not be fooled by electronic cigarettes. Indeed, harm reduction with tobacco products is not yet evidence based.²

With “light” cigarettes, born in the wedlock, the tobacco industry has fooled lay people.

With smokeless tobacco, even policy makers were fooled. In the U.S., use of smokeless tobacco parallels ($r=0.67$) smoking prevalence and tops it in Kentucky and West Virginia, where tobacco farms are concentrated (Figure 1).³ There is no harm reduction with smokeless tobacco, as its use is only an indicator of a lack of tobacco control policy.

The electronic cigarette, a young bastard, has been rapidly legitimated: the tobacco industry is now buying e-cigarette companies (www.theguardian.com/business/2014/jun/26/e-cigarettes-market-vaporisers), expecting a new entrance in addiction. Nicotine plus flavors are a great combination, as we know from menthol cigarettes.⁴ Mass opinion molding is similar to the tactics for cigarettes, targeting the youngest.⁵ As soon as 2010, Johnny Depp used electronic cigarettes in “The Tourist.” Indeed, now people prefer to be a tourist than a cowboy.

We must not forget Einstein’s quote: “Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” The craze for electronic cigarettes seems an indicator that the system is unable to assist smokers and provide them access to evidence-based treatment for cessation. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration must regulate electronic cigarettes and assistance for smoking cessation must be improved.

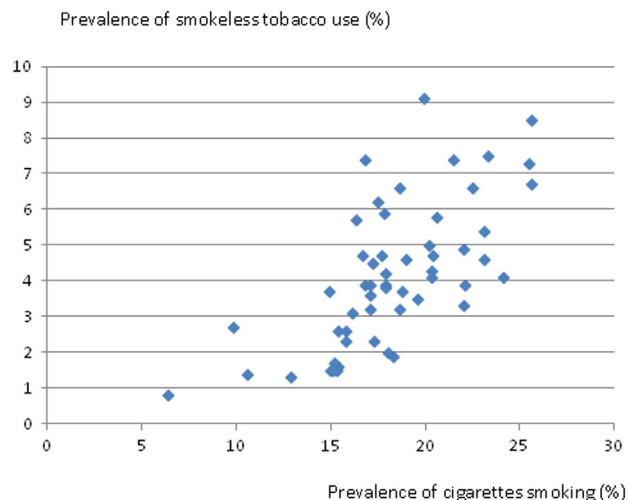


Figure 1. Prevalence of smokeless tobacco use and of cigarette smoking in the U.S.³

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