European Respiratory Society  
Annual Congress 2013

Abstract Group: 6.3. Tobacco, Smoking Control and Health Education  
Keyword 1: Smoking  
Keyword 2: Health policy  
Keyword 3: Public health

Title: Advice given to patients regarding electronic cigarettes by health care professionals

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Body: Safety concerns have led a number of medical bodies - including the European Respiratory Society (ERS) and the American Heart Association (AHA) - to issue statements discouraging the use of electronic cigarettes (eCigs). Despite such increasingly widespread advice, little is known about the opinions of health care professionals (HCPs) towards eCigs. We undertook a survey to determine what advice HCPs offer patients enquiring about eCigs. Of the 139 doctors, nurses & smoking cessation advisors surveyed, the majority (n=99) were aware their patients used eCigs & 57 had been directly questioned about their use. Overall, 41% would offer a somewhat/very supportive opinion with only 9% actively discouraging their use. Although most HCPs would direct patients to traditional smoking cessation services (n=108), the majority felt that eCigs were both safer than smoking & a useful adjunct to smoking cessation.

Our survey reveals three times as many HCPs encourage patients to continue using eCigs than recommend stopping them. Significantly only 16% of respondents felt confident in the advice they could offer about eCigs. We encourage all those involved with smoking cessation to only advocate techniques that use properly regulated products with an established evidence base & also to review consensus statements on the use of eCigs, such as that from the ERS¹ ¹ http://www.ersnet.org/news/item/4494-european-respiratory-society-statement-one-cigarettes-and-emerging-products-