



12 December 2019

Position statement on flavouring in e-cigarettes

The use of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) or e-cigarettes across the world has dramatically increased across the world over the past 5-10 years. E-cigarettes generate an inhalable aerosol from an e-liquid which usually contains nicotine, flavours, propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin. The popularity of E-cigarettes popularity has largely risen out of a desire to provide an effective smoking cessation tool for smokers. The evidence on their efficacy as smoking cessation tool remains limited to short-term studies and the long-term health effects of chronic e-cigarette use are unknown.

There is evidence of significant upsurge of adolescent e-cigarette use in some countries over recent years. Although we have not yet seen a similar pattern in Ireland, we as physicians wish to ensure that such a problem will not be recreated here.

E-cigarettes contain varying combinations and concentrations of flavours which are being vaporized at different temperatures via different devices with unknown long-term effects. There is emerging experimental evidence that the by-products of these flavours being inhaled during vaping have toxic effects on the lungs.

The latest cumulative research from a number of studies demonstrates that among youth, flavours increase product appeal, willingness to use and decrease harm perception of e-cigarettes. We believe there has been a clear marketing campaign by e-cigarette manufacturers to entice youth to the market by creating a range of child-friendly flavours for users.

Protecting children against the dangers of e-cigarettes and nicotine addiction must be paramount in our government's public health legislation. While we welcome the new legislation which will prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes to minors, we believe further measures are required. We must prevent youth access to these devices whilst allowing Irish ex-smokers wish to continue to use e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation tool. Historically, youth attraction to menthol and flavoured tobacco products led to the ban of these products in Ireland. Similar legislation on e-cigarettes is now required and we believe that banning flavours in e-cigarettes will discourage young people taking up these products.

In order to protect young people moving forward, we are calling on the government to introduce a ban on all flavourings in e-cigarette liquids available for purchase in Ireland with the exception of tobacco flavoured e-liquid.

Yours sincerely,

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