

Assessing the Depiction of Electronic Cigarettes in YouTube Videos.

R. HURWICH*, L.ROMITO

Indiana University School of Dentistry, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Objective: Use of electronic cigarettes is an emerging phenomenon with unknown health implications. YouTube videos of e-cigarettes are abundant, easily accessible, and possess the potential to promote e-cigarette use through the increased visibility of user-generated content and novel marketing strategies. As there are no published studies examining the content of e-cigarette videos, this study aimed to assess the depiction of e-cigarettes in terms of content and viewing qualities. **Methods:** Two calibrated reviewers conducted 4 searches for e-cigarette English language YouTube videos between August 2, 2013 and November 26, 2013. Based on a Google Insights analysis, the sample was selected from the top 20 search results for the terms “electronic cigarette,” and “e-cig”. Two searches were performed for each term using the filters “Relevance” and “View Count”. The initial sample included a total of 80 short-length videos from which duplicates were removed, leaving a final sample of 63 unique videos. Data collected included: title; uploader alias; length; number of views, “likes”, “dislikes”, comments and actor demographics. Videos were rated independently by the two reviewers for content theme and connotation. Inter-rater reliability was good ($k=.70$). Reviewer ratings were compared; consensus was reached on any discrepancies. Data was coded and recorded into an electronic database for statistical analysis. **Results:** The sample of assessed videos ($N=63$), generated the following means: video length, 135 seconds; views, 199,311; “likes”, 21.5; “dislikes”, 98.2; and posted comments, 244. Of the actors shown, 49.2% were male, 61.9% were Caucasian, and 33.3%, the largest segment, were coded as young (i.e. < 40 years). The most commonly mentioned brand was Blu. Video content connotation was coded as follows: positive (76.1%); neutral (17.4%); and negative (6.3%). Videos were categorized into one of the following seven content themes: Advertisement (33%); Instructional/how-to (17.4%); news clip/story (19.0%); product review (12.7%); entertainment (11.1%); public health/educational (3.1%); and personal testimonial (3.1%). **Conclusions:** YouTube videos of electronic cigarettes primarily feature young, male, Caucasian actors and depict e-cigarettes in a positive manner. Most videos were non-traditional advertisements.