

General practitioner opinions and practices regarding vaping for smoking cessation

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Introduction:

- Electronic cigarettes are the most frequently used smoking cessation tool in Switzerland (Joss, S *et al*)
- Many general practitioners (GPs) are reluctant to recommend e-cigarettes as they are not as regulated as medications, their relative long-term safety for smoking cessation unclear and they have a high potential for addiction
- Conversely, many GPs adopt a harm-reduction approach because vaping is popular, less harmful than smoking and effective for smoking cessation (Jacot Sadowski, I *et al*)

Objectives:

- To describe GPs opinions and practices regarding vaping for smoking cessation in Switzerland
- Assessing the interest of GPs for a decision aid (DA) for smoking cessation

Methods:

- We administered questionnaires to GPs from the Sentinella practice-based research network in Switzerland
- We asked GPs :
 - If they recommended vaping for smoking cessation
 - To rank the harm for health on a scale of 0 to 9 (9 = most harmful) of e-cigarettes, conventional cigarettes and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)
 - Interest in a DA for the choice of smoking cessation therapy.

Table 1

Type of product	Harmfulness to health of those that consume these products, 1: not harmful - 9: extremely harmful									
	Don't know	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cigarette	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	2.2	6.7	86.5
Heated tobacco product	13.5	0.0	0.0	4.5	2.2	9.0	7.9	19.1	21.3	22.5
Vape	13.5	0.0	5.6	2.2	4.5	11.2	10.1	23.6	14.6	14.6
NRT	5.6	11.2	23.6	19.1	6.7	9.0	14.6	6.7	1.1	2.2

Results: Of 89 GPs who completed the survey (52% response) :

- 63% were men
- 71% were aged >50
- 73% completed the German questionnaire and 27% completed the French questionnaire

Table 1: The proportion of GPs who gave a score $\geq 7/9$ for perceived harm was:

- 10% for NRTs
- 53% for e-cigarettes
- 95% for conventional cigarettes

Table 2: A minority (31.5%) recommended e-cigarettes for smoking cessation with regional differences (58% in French speaking compared to 22% in German speaking areas).

Graph 1: 65% of GPs stated they were interested in using a DA.

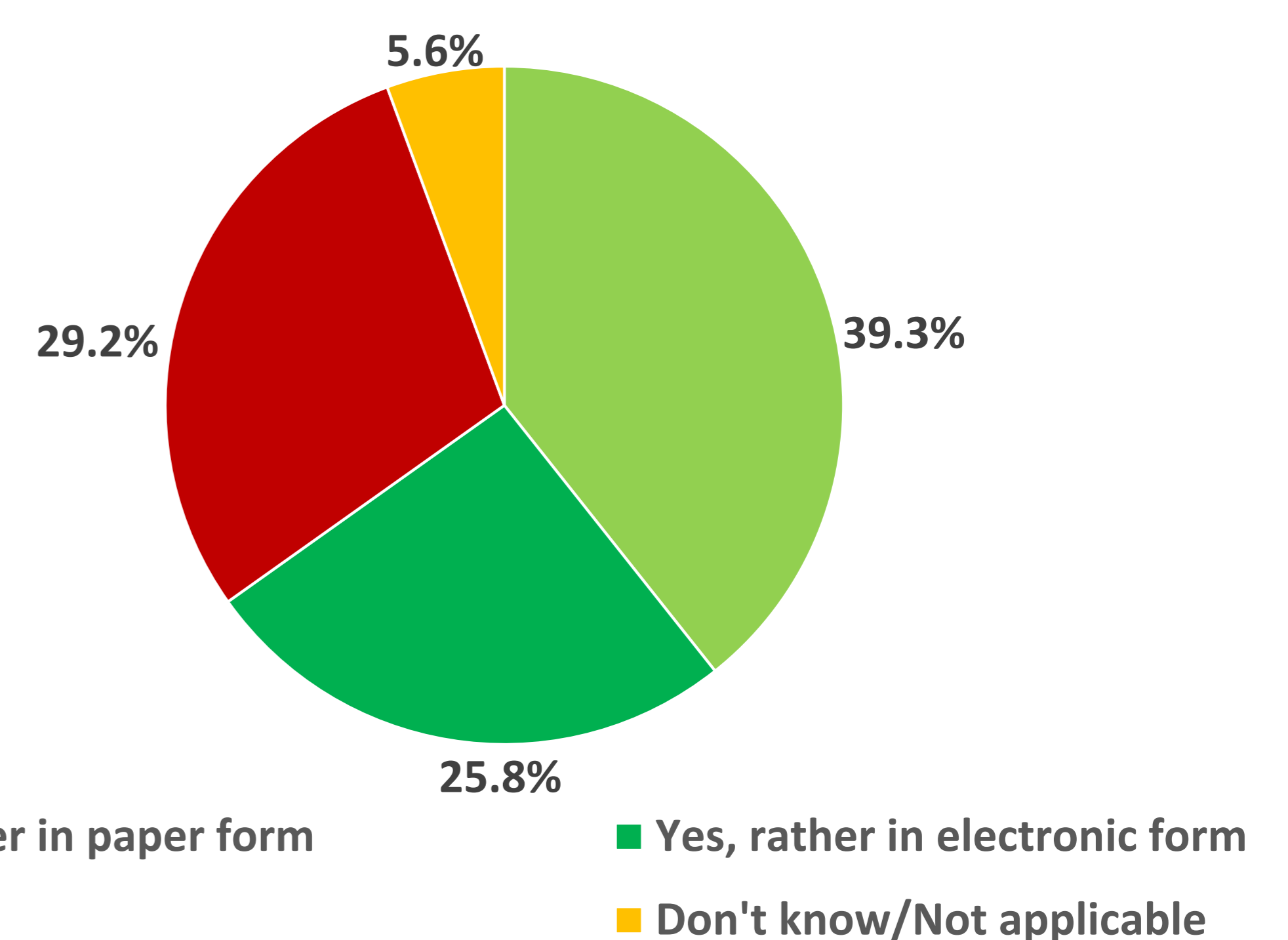
Graph 2: Situations in which GPs propose vaping or not

For each of the following treatments/cessation aids, indicate how often you PROPOSE them (on a scale from 0: never to 3: always)

	0: never	1: rarely	2: often	3: always
NRT	14.6	29.2	41.6	14.6
Varenicline	28.1	18.0	43.8	10.1
Bupropion	40.4	44.9	11.2	3.4
Vape	68.5	22.5	7.9	1.1
Snus	96.6	3.4	0.0	0.0
Heated tobacco	93.3	6.7	0.0	0.0
Hypnosis	31.5	42.7	22.5	3.4
Acupuncture	30.3	38.2	29.2	2.2

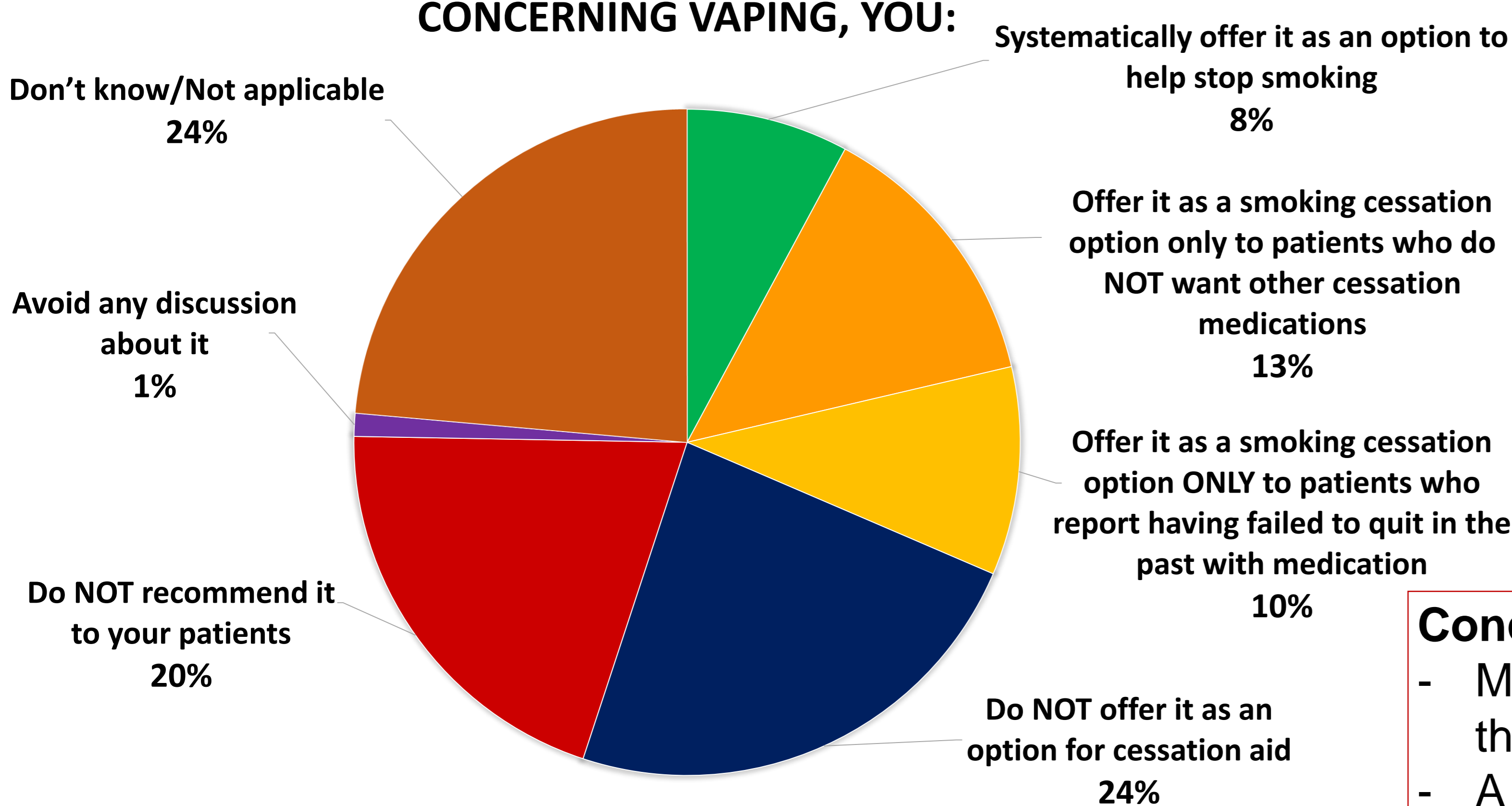
Table 2

Would you like to have a decision aid for the smoking cessation discussions ?



Graph 1

CONCERNING VAPING, YOU:



Graph 2

Conclusion:

- Most participating GPs estimated e-cigarettes to be less harmful than conventional cigarettes.
- A minority recommended e-cigarettes for smoking cessation.
- Most were interested in using a DA for smoking cessation counselling.
- Future studies should explore reasons for reluctance in using vaping and test interventions enabling patients to get balanced information on smoking cessation therapies.

Bibliography: Joss S, Moser A, Jakob J, Tal K, Etter J-F, Kevin S, Schoeni A, Poirson P, Reto A. Counseling in Vape Shops: A Survey of Vape Shop Managers in Switzerland. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2021 Oct 15;18(20):10861. doi: 10.3390/ijerph182010861. Jacot Sadowski I, Humair J-P, Cornuz J. Vaporette (ou cigarette électronique) : quelles recommandations pour le fumeur en 2017 ? *REV MED* 2017;13.566.1187, DOI : 10.53738