

PUFF-LIKE DISPOSABLE ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

EXPERT CONSENSUS ON THEIR REGULATION USING A FAST-TRACK DELPHI PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

Discreet in use, single-use and with a high addictive potential, new puff-like disposable electronic cigarettes raise many public health issues.

To support a rapid and informed political decision, we used our new *fast-track Delphi* approach to **develop consensual agreements amongst tobacco control experts** on the following target question:

« What are the aspects on which new puff-like disposable electronic cigarettes should be regulated, and in what way? »



Four disposable e-cigarettes (indicated by the arrows), among various pens and highlighters

Profile of the 23 experts who participated in the *fast-track Delphi* process

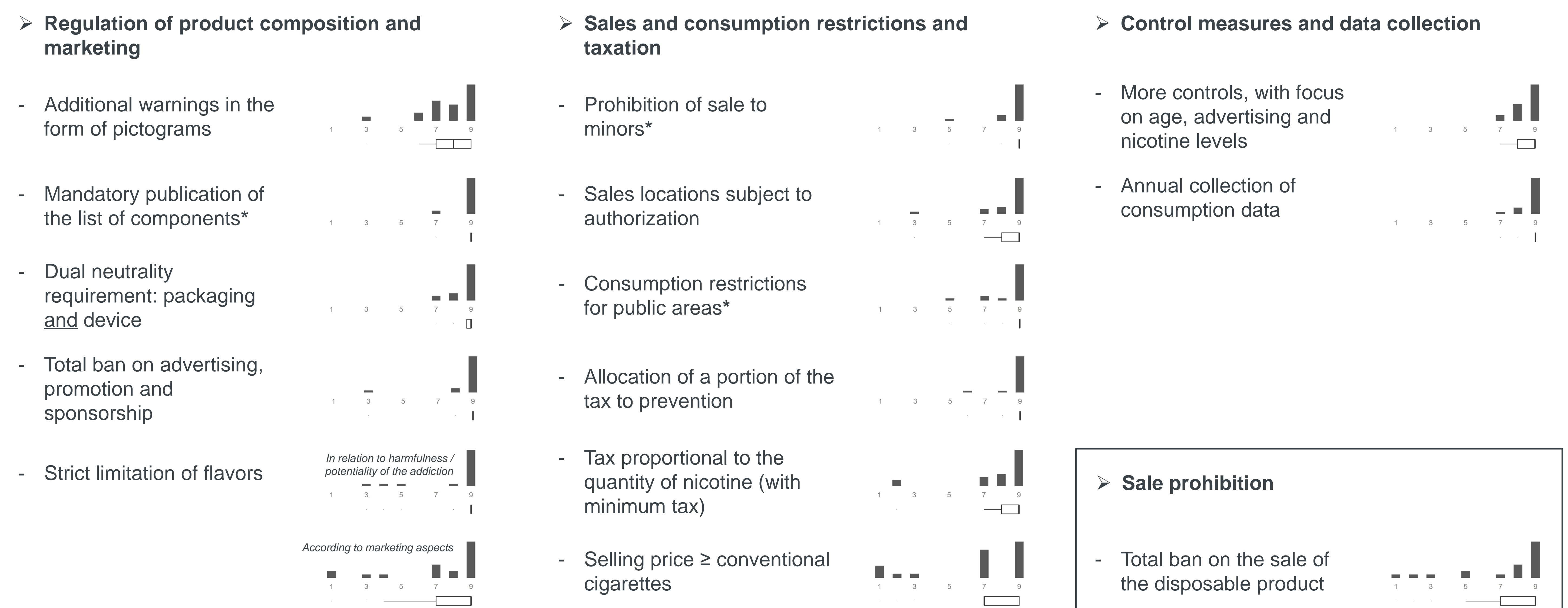
	n	Proportion (n=23)
Gender		
Feminine	16	70%
Masculine	7	30%
Field of professional expertise		
Smoking prevention	10	44%
Health promotion and prevention	7	30%
Clinical intervention for smoking cessation	3	13%
Fundamental or clinical research	2	9%
Family / community medicine or psychiatry	1	4%

METHOD: A FAST-TRACK DELPHI PROCESS

Status	Thresholds
Consensual agreement reached	Median ≥ 7 on the 1-9 Likert scale (<i>agreement</i>) and interquartile range (IQR) ≤ 3 scale points (<i>consensus</i>)
Mid-may 2022 Invitation sent to 38 experts	Selection and recruitment of 38 thematic experts from the French-speaking part of Switzerland
Step 1 June 17, 2022 13 experts (34%) 28 proposals generated ; 17 selected	Group meeting following an adapted version of the Nominal Group Technique (NGT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Phase 1 : individual ideas generation ➢ Phase 2 : pooling of ideas through successive rounds of discussion ➢ Phase 3 : discussion of clarification and structuring of thematic proposals ➢ Phase 4 : prioritization vote
Step 2 June 20-26, 2022 23 experts (60%) 21 statements (3 reached consensual agreement)	E-questionnaire (REDCap®) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Opinion quantification and expression on thematic statements, formulated from the proposals selected at the end of step 1
Step 3 June 27 – July 4, 2022 21 experts (91% of step 2 respondents) 23 statements (18 reached consensual agreement)	E-questionnaire (REDCap®) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Opinion re-quantification and expression on thematic statements that have not reached consensual agreement at the end of step 2, and reformulated based on comments from experts

RESULTS

21 statements out of 26 (80%) reached a consensual agreement between tobacco control experts:



*Provided with the future federal law on tobacco products and electronic cigarettes (LPTab/TabPG; effective in 2024 at the earliest)

CONCLUSION

The new *fast-track Delphi* process allowed, in an 18-days interval, the development and quantification of consensual agreements between Swiss tobacco control experts on the regulation of puff-like disposable electronic cigarettes. The expert panel recommends a ban on the sale of the disposable product. As it is not likely, a strict regulation should come into force for various aspects such as product composition and marketing control or sales restrictions – regulations that should go further than the current European directive and the future Swiss law (LPTab/TabPG).

The findings will be useful to support and guide political decision making from a public health and environmental perspective, as well as to provide guidance for the development of clinical recommendations and patient counselling.