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E-CIGS (VAPORIZERS): A PUBLIC HEALTH OPPORTUNITY THAT WILL BE MISSED?

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The most dangerous and deadly form of tobacco consumption, burning and inhaling tobacco cigarettes, is still free. Total eradication will not be possible for many reasons. Cigarettes have the connotation of the free world and prohibition would not only affect and criminalise marginalised people but also well respected members of our societies. So any attempt to curb the cigarette smoking should be welcomed by all exponents of public health. The dangerousness of cigarettes stems from burning tobacco and thus inhaling numerous

toxic ingredients. E-cigs avoid the toxic by-products vaporising the nicotine. The public debate on e-cigs is quite bizarre. Should they fall under tobacco or pharmaceutical laws or others? The arguments against e-cigs follow basically 2 lines. Firstly it is contended that 60mg of nicotine are lethal (e.g. in Tobacco Atlas). Nicotine can be lethal but only in doses of 0.5g–1g or more. Secondly it is said that vapouring paves the way to cigarette smoking, which has not been observed despite enormous growth of the e-cig market. Recently Swiss experts spoke out for allowing nicotine containing fluids in a Delphi study under regulations (e.g. no advertising). So far the sale of nicotine containing fluids is forbidden in Switzerland.