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Perceptions of harm and addiction among dual users of cigarettes and e-cigarettes

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The purpose of the current study was to examine perceptions of harm and addiction among a sample of cigarette and electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) users and examine whether these perceptions differ by demographics, other substance use, and tobacco use history.

The current sample consisted of 29 individuals who consented to participate in a clinical laboratory study of dual cigarette and e-cigarette users during 2015-2016. Screening data included in the current analyses were demographic items, tobacco use history, other substance use history, and perceptions of harm and addiction.

Sample Characteristics

Characteristics | Total N=29
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Gender | 
Male, N (%) | 15 (51.7)
Female, N (%) | 14 (48.3)
Age in years, M (SD) | 38.32 (13.77)
Race/Ethnicity | 
White, N (%) | 14 (48.3)
Black, N (%) | 15 (51.7)
Education | 
Up to HS Diploma/GED, N (%) | 14 (48.3)
Some College or more, N (%) | 14 (48.3)
Tried marijuana at least once, N (%) | 18 (62.1)
Past 30-day alcohol use, N (%) | 16 (55.2)
Past 30-day other tobacco product use, N (%) | 16 (55.2)
Cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars | 6 (20.7)
Hookah (waterpipe, shisha) or tobacco pipe | 2 (6.9)

Perceptions of Cigarette and E-cigarette Health Risk

Perceptions of Cigarette and E-cigarette Addiction

Differences in E-cigarette Perceptions by Characteristics

Discussion

• Among dual users in this sample, perceptions of health risk and addiction were significantly lower for e-cigarettes relative to regular cigarettes.
• Other tobacco product use was associated with perceived lower addiction risks for e-cigarettes and cigarettes (not displayed), and those who had tried marijuana had higher perceptions of harm of e-cigarettes relative to cigarettes.
• Some of these associations may be because lower perceptions of harm/addiction drive greater tobacco use overall or the alternative (experimentation alters perceptions), although some evidence suggests that lower perceptions of harm drive prospectively measured tobacco use.
• Current findings support future investigation of harm and addiction perceptions as well as the influence of marketing exposures particularly among individuals who use more than one tobacco product.

Acknowledgements and References

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1Smith SY, Curbow B, Stillman FA. Harm perception of nicotine products in college freshmen. Nicotine Tob Res. 2007;9(9):975-982.