



# PROJECT NEWS

September 2015

## Emerging RECIG Results: Youth and Young Adult Interviews



youth. In June 2015, we conducted 15 telephone interviews with Ontario youth and young adults (age 16-29). The interviews were designed to gain a deeper understanding of Ontario youth and young adults' use, attitudes and knowledge of e-cigarettes. In particular, we explored:

- The prevalence and associated measures (e.g. level, frequency of use) of e-cigarette use
- The social contexts and situations that influence use
- E-cigarette users' perceptions of cessation aid effectiveness

Welcome to the fourth in our series of six newsletters from OTRU's Research on E-Cigarettes (RECIG) Project! Our last newsletter provided an update on our social media analysis, knowledge synthesis, adult longitudinal study and our youth and young adult survey. This newsletter focuses on the results from the youth and young adult interviews and also provides an update on the Adult and the Youth

and Young Adult Surveys. Additional background information on the RECIG project can be found on the [OTRU website](#).

### Youth and Young Adult Interviews

#### Background & Methods

E-cigarettes are becoming increasingly popular among

Interview participants were recruited from the Youth and Young Adult Survey, a survey of 345 youth and young adults in Ontario, aged 15-29, who had taken at least one puff from an e-cigarette. Eight males and seven females participated; their average age was 21.9 (range: 16-28 years). Most of the participants were current (n=7) or former (n=3) tobacco cigarette smokers.

## In This Issue:

**PAGE ONE:** Youth and Young Adult Interviews

**PAGE TWO:** Youth and Young Adult Survey

**PAGE THREE:** Monitoring Trends of E-Cigarette Use: Adult Longitudinal Panel Follow-Up Survey

**PAGE FOUR:** AHRQ Invitation, Contact Information





## Results

Overall, six experimental e-cigarette users and nine experienced users participated in the interviews. Minimal health effects were self-reported; however, some positive (e.g. lung clearing) and negative (e.g. dry mouth) health effects were reported. Most of the participants noted that flavour impacted uptake and cessation. As one young woman said:

*"I probably wouldn't have tried it if it wasn't flavoured."*

Female, age 22

## Types of Devices

Most participants had tried nicotine e-cigarettes. All experienced e-cigarette users routinely used second or third generation e-cigarette models, while participants who experimented used first generation devices. Not surprisingly, the more experienced



the participant, the more familiar they were with different e-cigarette devices. The majority of participants determined which e-cigarette to use based on availability and price. Most experienced users purchased their e-cigarettes at vape shops or convenience stores and experimental users obtained their e-cigarettes through social sources.

## Patterns of Use

Participants who had only experimented with e-cigarettes said that they tried the device due to curiosity and peer influence. The reasons that

experienced e-cigarette users gave for continued use were cessation and price accessibility. Some (n=6) participants only use e-cigarettes in private homes, while others (n=4) vape in public places. Sharing e-cigarettes was usually only done to introduce participants to e-cigarettes. The main reason for the lack of sharing was a concern with hygiene.

## E-Cigarette Culture

The majority of participants had clear opinions about the negative social acceptability of tobacco cigarettes. The existence of a "culture" of e-cigarettes emerged as participants spoke about their experiences. Some participants (n=3) commented on the allure or "cool" factor of e-cigarettes. The participants were uncertain about whether e-cigarettes really were cool because they contain chemicals and have unknown health effects. One of these participants reflected:

*"I see with my younger brother who is turning about thirteen now with his friends. They, they're drawn towards e-cigarettes in a way that they would never be drawn towards traditional tobacco products so I think the tobacco companies who have subsidiaries that are e-cigarette companies are definitely capitalizing on that to try to cultivate the next generation of smokers."*

Male, age 17

Participants noted that part of the culture of e-cigarettes is doing vape tricks, including cloud chasing, and collecting various e-cigarette models and juices.

## Youth and Young Adult Survey

In our third newsletter, we presented some preliminary results from the Youth and Young Adult Survey. More results are now available:

- Among ever e-cigarette users, 9% have used an e-cigarette for the first time in the last 30 days, 28% within the last 1-6 months, and 21% within the last 7-12 months (i.e., 58% within the last

# PROJECT NEWS



- year)
- The majority used their last e-cigarette with their friends (61%) or family (29%)
- When asked how likely they would use e-cigarettes in the future, 41% of ever e-cigarette users reported that they would (definitely or probably) use e-cigarettes in the next 30 days and 48% said they would vape in the next 6 months
- 23% of participants reported that they bought their last e-cigarette from a vape shop or vape lounge, 22% borrowed/bummed one, 21% bought it at a convenience store or small grocery store, 6% bought online, and 5% received their e-cigarette as a gift
- Among those who purchased e-cigarettes for their own use, 79% purchased their last e-cigarette in Canada, 8% online and 6% outside Canada

- e-cigarette by gender, race, or education
- When asked how likely they would use e-cigarettes in the future, 5% of never e-cigarette users reported that they would (definitely or probably) use e-cigarettes in the next 30 days and 9% in the next 6 months
- Among those who purchased e-cigarettes, 28% purchased their e-cigarettes at a vape shop or vape lounge, 25% at a convenience store or small grocery store, 11% on the internet, 6% at a gas station, 4% at a pharmacy, and 1% at a supermarket
- Among those who purchased e-cigarettes for their own use, 84% purchased their last e-cigarette in Canada, 7% online and 9% outside Canada

## Monitoring Trends of E-Cigarette Use: Adult Longitudinal Panel Follow-Up Survey

In Newsletter 2, we reported on results of the baseline survey about e-cigarette use among 1,962 smokers or recent smokers. We have now launched the six-month follow-up survey. Together with the results from the baseline survey, the follow-up survey results may provide guidance to policy-makers on the effectiveness of e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation tool, and their ability to act as a gateway to tobacco and other substance use.

Results from the baseline survey show:

- Among ever e-cigarette users, 11% had used an e-cigarette for the first time in the last 30 days, 22% within the last 1-6 months, and 23% within the last 7-12 months (i.e., 56% within the last year)
- Compared to those who never used e-cigarettes, ever e-cigarette users were more likely to be young adults aged 18-34 (25% vs. 17%), current smokers (62% vs. 46%), and employed (70% vs. 63%)
- There was no difference in ever use of



## References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Notes from the field: Electronic cigarette use among middle and high school students- United States, 2011-2012. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2013 Sept 6;62(35): 729-730. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6235a6.htm>.
2. Vardavas CI, Flippidis FT, Agaku IT. Determinants and prevalence of e-cigarette use throughout the European Union: A secondary analysis of 26,566 youth and adults from 27 countries. *Tobacco Control*. 2014 June 16 [Epub ahead of print].



## Invitation to Propose Additional Research Questions

This grant provides the opportunity for Applied Health Research Questions (AHRQ). An AHRQ is a question posed by a health system policy maker or provider (Knowledge User) in the interest of obtaining research evidence to inform planning, policy, and/or program development that will benefit the broader Ontario health system. Knowledge Users are invited to submit a Knowledge Request to Research Providers with the goal of identifying research gaps and opportunities for knowledge generation.

As a Research Provider, OTRU invites you to submit your knowledge needs for the development of policies, programs, and public education about e-cigarettes. Based on the nature of your request, there are three types of responses we, as Research Providers, can provide: a *rapid response*, a *research report* or *technical brief*, or a *research project*. We are excited about this opportunity to contribute to your work on this critical issue!

For more information about initiating an AHRQ request, contact:

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## Newsletter Production

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The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) is recognized as a Canadian leader in tobacco control research, monitoring and evaluation, teaching and training and as a respected source of science based information on tobacco control.

RECIG is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's Health System Research Fund (HSRF). More information about HSRF can be found at [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/ministry/research/hsrf\\_target\\_research.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/ministry/research/hsrf_target_research.aspx)

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