

## **Nicotine vaping among Quitline clients: analysis of counsellor observations following the introduction of the prescription model for nicotine vaping in October 2021**

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**Introduction / Issues:** New recommendation for nicotine vaping products (NVPs) plus behavioural counselling (eg Quitline) as second-line treatment for smoking cessation in people where first-line treatments have failed.

**Method / Approach** Following training in new Quitline counselling protocols for people using NVPs to stop smoking and for people seeking to quit vaping in September 2021, a continuing Microsoft Teams chat for Quitline counsellors called 'Vape Insights' was initiated in November 2021 to document emerging issues in real time. A content analysis of the 'Vape Insights' chat was conducted for a 6 month period, from its initiation to April 2022.

**Key Findings:** Counsellors observed calls from people wanting to try NVPs to quit smoking as well as from people who had successfully quit smoking using NVPs and who were now trying to quit vaping. Severe nicotine withdrawal symptoms prompted calls from people trying to quit vaping. Some clients stockpiled nicotine liquid in anticipation of the legislation change, whilst others continued to access it as they had previously. Some clients reported finding it difficult to find a doctor who prescribed NVPs. Counsellors observed clients substituting vaping for smoking, adding vaping to their smoking and some challenges with escalating vape use. Teen vaping and NVP safety concerns also featured.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** The NVP prescription model appears to have prompted people who had successfully quit smoking using NVPs to try to quit vaping. It has also sparked interest in NVPs as a cessation aid among people who smoke, although finding a prescriber can be challenging.

**Implications for Practice or Policy** Quitline can play a vital role in providing psychoeducation on symptoms of nicotine withdrawal, nicotine overuse and nicotine tolerance. This increases client understanding of their vaping experiences and encourages use of NVPs in ways that promote smoking cessation and facilitate cessation of NVP use following successful smoking cessation.

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