

Youth-led strategies to reduce vaping and smoking among young people attending schools and youth health services in Sydney Local Health District.

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Background/Purpose:

Increasing vaping and smoking rates among young people (YP) is of global concern. Approaches to successful nicotine cessation in YP are poorly studied, particularly those involving youth themselves in program design and delivery.

Approach:

National and statewide nicotine cessation campaigns targeting youth provide a framework upon which YP from priority populations, together with health and education staff in SLHD, are co-designing nicotine cessation interventions tailored to their needs. Established partnerships between Health and Education in SLHD facilitates on-site availability of trained staff to deliver behavioural interventions and free on site nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). With oversight, YP learn to provide peer health promotion for vape- and smoke-free lifestyles and support peers in cessation strategies. Using a mixed methods evaluation, we will report on reach, adoption, acceptability, feasibility and changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour.

Outcomes/Impact:

A series of workshops with YP representing youth health services and school students identified that YP require: programs tailored to their own needs, education staff who are trained in nicotine cessation strategies, support to design nicotine cessation resources themselves; assistance with behavioural strategies, NRT packs available on site at school and for after hours, processes to signal the need to leave the classroom for counselling, and counselling contact details easily available. Building on existing integrated services between health and education in the district, as well as the WHIN nurse program, we aim to expand and scale up across a range of schools and youth services within SLHD and elsewhere.

Innovation and Significance:

Using a bottom-up approach, this tailored nicotine cessation intervention addresses identified barriers to healthcare engagement by YP. Results will inform program expansion and replication in other school and youth service. Involving and listening to YP promotes deeper insight into what youth need for their health, addressing a common gap in current youth health programs.

Disclosure of Interest Statement (example):

The authors would like to acknowledge the Cancer Institute NSW for a seed funding grant procured in 2024

None of the authors have a conflict of interest to disclose