

## Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Women's Cultural Practices of Vaping

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**Introduction:** The use of nicotine vaping products has rapidly increased internationally and in Australia in recent years. Emerging work suggests that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people may be more likely to vape than their heterosexual and cisgender peers. As a population with historically high rates of smoking, lesbian, bisexual, and queer (LBQ) women may have unique perceptions and experiences of vaping that are important to understand to inform community responses.

**Methods:** QSOX is a longitudinal qualitative study of LBQ women's alcohol and nicotine use in Victoria and New South Wales. We examined cultural practices of vaping among LBQ women through a thematic analysis of two rounds of interviews with 60 participants, conducted six months apart.

**Key Findings:** Many participants discussed vaping in comparison to smoking, while emphasising vaping as distinct practice with different cultural meanings, affordances, and sociability to smoking. Some participants viewed vaping as a more feminine practice than smoking, which aligned with lower perceived risks. Despite perceiving vaping as more socially acceptable than smoking, some participants expressed a sense of embarrassment about vaping, while others reported substantial challenges and health concerns.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** As Governments, healthcare providers, and community organisations increasingly identify the need for harm reduction in relation to vaping, this presentation provides a more detailed understanding of LBQ women's relationships with vaping, with recommendations for targeted support. Examining vaping as a gendered cultural practice increases our understanding of the unique motivations for uptake and barriers to prevention within LGBTQ communities.

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