

Can e-cigarettes assist opiate agonist treatment clients to quit smoking? Preliminary results from HARMONY, a multi-site, single-blind RCT of e-cigarettes and NRT

EMMA AUSTIN^{1,2,3}, MELISSA JACKSON^{1,2,3}, CHARLOTTE ISMAY^{1,3}, PAUL HABER^{3,4}, CRAIG RODGERS⁵, TIM HO⁶, RICHARD HALLINAN⁷, NICHOLAS LINTZERIS^{3,8}, CHRISTOPHER OLDMEADOW⁹, NADINE EZARD^{3,5,10}, CORAL GARTNER¹¹, BILLIE BONEVSKI¹², ADRIAN DUNLOP^{1,2,3}

¹ Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services, Hunter New England Local Health District, Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, ² School of Medicine and Public Health, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, New South Wales, Australia, ³ Drug & Alcohol Clinical Research & Improvement Network, St Leonard's, New South Wales, Australia, ⁴ Drug Health Services, Sydney Local Health District, Camperdown, New South Wales, Australia, ⁵ Alcohol and Drug Service, St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst, New South Wales, Australia, ⁶ Drug Health, Western Sydney Local Health District, Parramatta, New South Wales, Australia, ⁷ Drug Health Services, South Western Sydney Local Health District, Liverpool, New South Wales, Australia, ⁸ Drug and Alcohol Services, South East Sydney Local Health District, Surry Hills, New South Wales, Australia, ⁹ Hunter Medical Research Institute, New Lambton Heights, New South Wales, Australia, ¹⁰ National Centre for Clinical Research on Emerging Drugs/NDARC, UNSW Medicine, Sydney Australia, ¹¹ School of Public Health, University of Queensland, Herston, Queensland, Australia, ¹² College of Medicine & Public Health, Flinders University, Bedford Park, South Australia, Australia

Presenter's email: <Emma.Austin4@health.nsw.gov.au>

Introduction and Aims: Most (94%) opiate agonist treatment (OAT) clients smoke tobacco. Although many are interested in quitting, relapse is common and few interventions have demonstrated efficacy for this population. HARMONY will investigate the effectiveness of vaporised nicotine products (VNPs) for smoking cessation in OAT clients.

Design and Methods: HARMONY is a single-blinded parallel-group randomised controlled trial comparing 12-weeks treatment of VNPs to combination NRT on tobacco smoking abstinence in 572 adult OAT clients wishing to reduce/quit smoking. Recruitment across six NSW Local Health Districts commenced in May 2020 however COVID-19 will see it continue until early-2023. We present preliminary recruitment, retention, treatment and safety data for those who have completed or are eligible to complete end-of-treatment (week-12) and follow-up (week-24) interviews.

Results: Current recruitment N=128 at 26/04/2022 at four sites. Mean age was 45.3 years (SD10.4), 75/128(58.6%) were male, 34/128(26.6%) identified as Aboriginal and 41(32.0%) did not complete year 10. Mean baseline cigarettes smoked/day was 19(SD 11); 63.3%(81/128) smoke <5mins after waking. Of 57 eligible participants, 41 completed week-12 interviews (66% retention). 8/41(20%) reported no tobacco use. Of 29 eligible participants, 22 completed week-24 interviews (76% retention). 3/29 (10%) reported no tobacco use. Reductions were seen in mean cigarettes smoked/day from baseline to week-12 (18(8) v. 8(6) p=<0.001) and to week-24 (18(8) v. 11(8) p=0.005) respectively. 32 non-serious adverse events were reported.

Discussions and Conclusions: Preliminary treatment and safety data is encouraging indicating acceptable recruitment and retention rates. While treatment demonstrates some success, longer-term relapse is evident.

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