

Psychosocial factors that prevent against e-cigarette use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teenagers

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Introduction/Background: Despite the enduring impacts of colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teenagers are resilient. They are the emerging leaders and custodians of their cultures and histories. Over the past two decades, there has been a notable decline in substance use among Aboriginal youth, particularly for alcohol and cigarette smoking. However, schools and communities have voiced concerns about the rising popularity of e-cigarette use in recent years, and the risk of associated acute and long-term health effects. This study investigates substance use patterns, particularly e-cigarette use, and identifies psychosocial factors that protect against use among Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth.

Method: This study analyses data from the first wave of a cluster RCT of *Strong & Deadly Futures*, a school-based, culturally inclusive substance use prevention program. The trial was overseen by an Aboriginal Reference Group and pre-registered with the Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry. Baseline prevalence rates of e-cigarette use, alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use were examined, followed by multinomial analyses to assess associations between e-cigarette use and sociodemographic and psychosocial factors.

Results: Data were collected from n=368 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students (mean age 13.25) attending Year 7 or 8 at 22 Australian government and non-government secondary schools in NSW, QLD and WA. At baseline, 60.2% of the sample had never tried an e-cigarette. Teenagers who did not use e-cigarettes had higher personal wellbeing, safer attitudes, greater self-efficacy to resist peer pressure, and perceived lower rates of vaping among their peers.

Conclusions: Self-efficacy and personal wellbeing are strongly linked to substance use among youth. Ensuring Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students are equipped with knowledge, skills and supported in their social and emotional wellbeing will help them to avoid harms related to e-cigarette use.

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