

Has regulating e-cigarettes impacted their use among a sample of people who use ecstasy and/or other stimulants? Findings from the Ecstasy and Related Drugs Reporting System

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Introduction and Aims: E-cigarette use has increased rapidly since the mid-to-late 2000s, and there remains substantial debate regarding the safety and efficacy of these devices, and how they should be regulated. In Australia, legislation came into effect on 1 October 2021, requiring people to obtain a prescription to legally import nicotine vaping products. This paper aims to examine the impact of this legislation on e-cigarette use among a sample of people who use ecstasy and/or other illicit stimulants.

Design and Methods: Data are drawn from face-to-face interviews conducted with annual cross-sectional samples of people who use ecstasy and/or other illegal stimulants recruited from capital cities as part of the 2014-2022 Ecstasy and Related Drugs Reporting System. Data collection for 2022 is currently underway (n=137) and will be completed in June (expected sample size, n=800).

Results: Past six-month ('recent') e-cigarette use remained relatively stable from 2014 (34%) to 2020 (39%), before increasing sharply in 2021 (58%). Preliminary analyses suggests that use remains elevated in 2022: to-date, 61% of participants have reported recent use, predominantly non-prescribed use (59%). Few participants have reported prescribed use. Among those reporting recent use in 2022, most report using e-cigarettes containing nicotine (92%) and had not used them as smoking cessation tools (64%), consistent with previous years. Most (87%) reported that they had not experienced any difficulty accessing nicotine vaping products in the past six months.

Discussions and Conclusions: Our preliminary findings suggest that legislation requiring people to obtain a prescription to legally import nicotine vaping products has had little impact on use.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (including the EDRS) is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Health. AP has received untied educational grants from Seqirus and Mundipharma. RS has received untied educational grants from Seqirus. Funding from these organisations has now ceased, funding was for work unrelated to this project, and the funding bodies had no role in study design, analysis and reporting. No pharmaceutical grants were received for this study. AP and RS are supported by a National Health and Medical Research Council Investigator Fellowship.