

One quarter of young Australians have used e-cigarettes: results from a cross-sectional survey of over 4000 adolescents

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Issues: Adolescent e-cigarette use and its associated harms are a public health concern¹. A 2019 survey found that 10% of 14-17-year-olds in Australia had used e-cigarettes². However, more recent international data suggests that rates are rising³.

Method: We investigated prevalence and correlates of e-cigarette use among a diverse group of Australian teenagers who took part in the *Health4Life* study. From July to December 2022 students between the ages of 14 and 17 (mean age = 15.71) from 70 schools in NSW, QLD, and WA (N = 4,445) completed an online survey assessing lifetime e-cigarette use, frequency of e-cigarette use, and age at first use.

Key Findings: 26% had used an e-cigarette in their lifetime, with the average age of first use being 14 years of age (SD = 1.29). 20% reported e-cigarette use in the past 12-months, with 22% of those using daily. The prevalence of e-cigarette use was higher for boys and non-binary participants than girls, no other socio-demographic characteristics were associated with differential prevalence in lifetime or past 12-month e-cigarette use.

Discussions and Conclusions: Regular use of e-cigarettes among Australian adolescents is accelerating fast compared to the use of other substances such as tobacco, cannabis, ecstasy, methamphetamines, and cocaine². These findings emphasize the necessity for public health initiatives to prevent the initiation of e-cigarette use among Australian teenagers. A comprehensive prevention strategy, including individual, school, and community-based approaches is required to effectively curb this rapid increase.

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