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| **Assessing Perceptions of University Students in NZ on Vaping, Cigarette Smoking, and the Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Goal** |
| **Background/Objectives**Smoking kills about 5,000 people prematurely annually in New Zealand (NZ); costs society >$1.6 billion per year, and amplifies social inequalities, with Māori and Pacific people worst affected. NZ wants to reduce smoking to ≤5% of the population by 2025 (Smokefree Aotearoa 2025). Vaping (e-cigarette use) has potential to substitute for smoking and is rapidly expanding in NZ. However, little is known on smoking and vaping in university students or their perceptions of Smokefree Aotearoa 2025. This project examines these before and after policy change on nicotine e-cigarettes.**Methods**A baseline survey was conducted in March-May 2018 in all eight NZ universities, and a follow-up survey is planned for March-May 2019. SPSS was used for data analysis.**Results**2134 students (40% male, 58% female) were included in the analysis: 1150 (54%) had ever smoked and 266 (12.5%) currently smoked. Of current smokers: 44% smoked at least daily, 64% smoked 1-5 cigarettes/day, 66% smoked their first cigarette >60 minutes after waking, 89% never or almost never smoked in indoor spaces and 68% in outdoor spaces where smoking is banned, 69% planned to quit at some point and 40% had tried to quit in the last 12 months. 2101 answered questions on vaping and 41% had ever vaped. Of ever vapers, 19% vaped daily or almost daily, 75% never or almost never vaped in indoor spaces and 67% in outdoor spaces where smoking is banned, 52% vaped out of curiosity, 18% to quit smoking and 13% just enjoyed it; 29% vaped daily for a month or more, 84% used nicotine-containing products and almost all used rechargeable e-cigarettes. 77% of respondents said e-cigarettes were much less or somewhat less harmful than tobacco. Nearly half (49%) of respondents indicated they were aware of the Smokefree 2025 goal, 96% supported it, 87% thought it can be achieved, and 87% thought vaping can help achieve it.**Discussion**Our preliminary results suggest the Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 target of ≤5% might be achieved for university students. Many students were aware of vaping, had tried it and had positive perceptions about it, thus vaping might be warmly embraced in this population. There was also overwhelming support for Smokefree 2025, and great optimism on its achievability, despite many students being unaware of it before this survey. A follow-up survey will be conducted in March-May 2019.**Keywords:** vaping, e-cigarettes, smoking, Smokefree Aotearoa 2025, university students  |