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MEDIA RELEASE

Legalising vaping will improve health and save money, study finds

Making vaping products legal and more readily available will improve overall population health and result in substantial health care savings according to a new study published this week in the journal *Epidemiology*.

The [study](#) considered all the possible benefits and risks of legalising vaping in New Zealand to predict the likely future health and financial impact.

According to Conjoint Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn, chairman of the Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association, the findings also apply to Australia. 'If vaping was available to Australian smokers, we could expect similar benefits here as well'.

'Modelling studies like this help to estimate the future risks and benefits of a policy change. While there will always be uncertainties, this study shows a significant overall benefit of legalising vaping to health and savings in health care costs' Dr Mendelsohn said.

'The study findings support a fairly permissive regulatory environment where vaporised nicotine products are readily available to adult smokers along with regulations that limit the risks of youth uptake'.

Australia has very strict regulations on vaping. It is illegal to sell nicotine liquid in Australia and it is an offence to possess or use nicotine for vaping without a doctor's prescription.

Australia is the only western democracy to ban the sale and use of nicotine for vaping. Vaping is legal and widely available in the UK, US, Canada, New Zealand and European Union.

The suggested policy options recommended by the study authors include

- Light regulation of vape shops
- No excise taxes
- Advice for smokers on what device to use, nicotine strength
- Standards for chemical constituents of the products to minimise risk
- Regulations to reduce youth uptake, such as age limits on sales, bans on marketing aimed at youth and possibly restrictions on flavours that might be particularly attractive to youth

'Australian policy makers should find this study very compelling. It shows that there will be substantial improvements in public health and cost savings if we act now. Australian smokers are dying unnecessarily while we wait' Dr Mendelsohn said.

ENDS

Study

[Petrovic-van der Veen FS et al. Potential country-level health and cost impacts of legalizing domestic sale of vaporized nicotine products. Epidemiology 2019](#)

[ATHRA blog](#)

Contact

Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn
M: 0415 976 783 | E: c.mendelsohn@unsw.edu.au

What is ATHRA?

Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA) is a registered health promotion charity established to reduce the harm from tobacco smoking in Australia. ATHRA aims to raise awareness of less harmful alternatives for adult smokers who are otherwise unable to quit. ATHRA's broader goal is to encourage the complete cessation of tobacco smoking in Australia. For more information, visit www.athra.org.au.

ATHRA is funded by unconditional donations from businesses and the general public. It does not accept donations from tobacco companies or their subsidiaries.

None of the directors has ever had any financial or commercial relationship with any electronic cigarette or tobacco company.

Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association

11 Carlotta Rd, Double Bay 2028
T: 0401 113 0372 E: colin@athra.org.au
W: www.athra.org.au

ATHRA is registered as a charity with the
Australian Charities and Not-for-profits
Commission | ABN 72 6222 11223



Directors: A/Prof Colin Mendelsohn | Dr Alex Wodak AM | Dr Joe Kosterich | Dr Catherine Silsbury | Mr Stephen Elsom