

Youth just as likely to try e-cigarettes as smoking

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Young people are just as likely to try electronic cigarettes as smoking, according to a new report from the Propel Centre for Population Health Impact at the University of Waterloo.

The findings, published today in [Tobacco Use in Canada: Patterns and Trends](#), reveal that approximately 20 per cent of youth between the ages of 15 and 19 experiment with vaping, the same number who try [cigarettes](#).

"E-cigarettes have become increasingly popular among Canadians," said David Hammond, lead author on the report and a professor in the School of Public Health and Health Systems at Waterloo. "Now one in five youth will try vaping before graduating [high school](#)."

The devices create a vapour by heating a chemical solution of [propylene glycol](#), flavouring agents and sometimes nicotine. Unlike regular cigarettes, e-cigarettes do not contain tobacco and no combustion takes place when they are used.

"There is no question that e-cigarettes are a harmful consumer product because of all of the chemicals users inhale. However, because they don't produce smoke, they are significantly less harmful than smoking," said Professor Hammond, who testified to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health in November.

The Canadian government has not approved the sale of e-cigarettes

containing nicotine, despite an increasing number of smokers using the products to help them quit or during times when smoking is not allowed. Nicotine is the substance that is primarily responsible for the addictiveness of tobacco.

"At the moment, we have an uncontrolled experiment with e-cigarettes: millions of Canadians are trying products with unknown safety standards for a wide variety of reasons. There is an urgent need for even more evidence to guide policy in this fast-moving area," said Professor Hammond.

Currently, several provinces are developing policies for the sale and marketing of e-cigarettes both with and without nicotine. In March, Parliament released a report identifying 14 recommendations to regulate them.

In total, more than 2.5 million Canadians have tried [e-cigarettes](#), with smokers and [young people](#) making up the largest demographic of ongoing users.

Provided by University of Waterloo

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