

Vapers do not undermine desire to quit smoking

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Smokers who regularly spend time with vapers (people who use e-cigarettes) are more likely to try quitting smoking, according to a new study carried out by UCL.

The study, published today in *BMC Medicine* and funded by Cancer Research UK, found that smokers who were regularly exposed to vapers (as opposed to other smokers) were around 20% more likely to have reported both a high current motivation to quit and made a recent quit attempt.

"It is becoming increasingly more commonplace for smokers to come into contact with vapers and some concerns have been raised that this could 'renormalise' smoking in England and undermine smokers' motivation to quit," said the study's lead author, Dr. Sarah Jackson (UCL Institute of Epidemiology & Health Care).

"Our results found no evidence that spending time with vapers discourages smokers from quitting, which should help to alleviate concerns about the wider public health impact of e-cigarettes."

Around a quarter (25.8%) of smokers in the study said they regularly spent time with vapers. Of these, around a third (32.3%) had made an attempt to quit smoking in the previous year—a higher rate than was observed among smokers who did not regularly spend time with vapers (26.8%).

"A key factor driving these differences may be that smokers who are regularly exposed to [e-cigarette](#) use by others are more likely to use e-cigarettes themselves. When smokers' own use of e-cigarettes was taken into account, exposure to other people using e-cigarettes appeared to have little impact on how motivated smokers were to stop, and whether they made a recent quit attempt," explained Dr. Jackson.

The study was conducted over a period of three and a half years, from November 2014 to May 2018. Data was provided by almost 13,000 participants of the Smoking Toolkit Study, an ongoing monthly study about smoking habits in England.

E-cigarettes are estimated to be around 95% safer than smoking tobacco, according to Public Health England. The authors say the findings should offer some reassurance in terms of the wider public health impact of e-cigarettes, particularly given evidence that the alternative, cigarette smoking, appeared to reduce other smokers' motivation to quit.

Kruti Shrotri, Cancer Research UK's tobacco control expert, said: "So far, there hasn't been much evidence about whether e-cigarettes might make smoking tobacco seem normal again. So it's encouraging to see that mixing with people who vape is actually motivating smokers to quit. As the number of people who use e-cigarettes to quit [smoking](#) rises, we hope that [smokers](#) who come into contact with them are spurred on to give up tobacco for good."

More information: Sarah E. Jackson et al, Are smokers who are regularly exposed to e-cigarette use by others more or less motivated to stop or to make a quit attempt? A cross-sectional and longitudinal survey, *BMC Medicine* (2018). [DOI: 10.1186/s12916-018-1195-3](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-018-1195-3)

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