

Where are teens getting e-cigarettes? It depends.

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University of Cincinnati research on adolescent use of electronic cigarettes was featured prominently at the American Academy of Health Behavior 2019 Annual Scientific Meeting on Monday, March 11, in

Greenville, South Carolina.

"Electronic Cigarette Acquisition Means Among Adolescent Daily Users" earned Ashley Merianos, an assistant professor with UC's School of Human Services, the 2019 Judy K. Black Award, which is presented by the AAHB in recognition of early-career health behavior research that is innovative and rigorous and that makes an important contribution to science or practice.

Merianos' research is a reflection of UC's commitment to solving urban issues related to health and well-being, prevention, quality care, researching the next cure, equality in access and talent development. Urban Health and Urban Impact are key components of the university's strategic direction, Next Lives Here.

Merianos performed a secondary analysis of the [2016 National Youth Tobacco Survey](#) and found that of 1,579 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 who had admitted to using [electronic cigarettes](#) within the last 30 days of the survey, 13.6 percent were daily users. Her research further found that those daily users were far more likely to obtain their electronic cigarettes and accessories from commercial sources than their non-daily using counterparts.

Adolescents for whom electronic cigarette use was a daily habit were 5.2 times more likely to buy their e-cigarettes from a drug store, 4.4 times more likely to get them from a vape shop, and 3.3 times more likely to purchase them from a mall kiosk.

Daily users were also more likely to purchase their e-cigarettes and vaping supplies online, albeit to a lesser degree; they were 2.5 times more likely to make online purchases than non-daily users. "The internet is very hard to regulate, especially for e-cigarette sales," Merianos says.

Conversely, non-daily electronic cigarette users were found to be slightly more likely to turn to their friends or [family members](#) to obtain vaping products.

Merianos recommends that local and state governments adopt 21 as the age of legal purchase to prevent adolescents from getting them, as well as restricting [e-cigarette](#) sales from commercial and Internet sources.

"We need to inform parents and community members about where their children are getting e-cigarettes from so that they can act as gatekeepers to prevent their children from obtaining these products," Merianos says.

"Also, we need tobacco-use prevention programs to add information on e-cigarettes."

Merianos, who is also an affiliate member of the Division of Emergency Medicine at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, gave an oral presentation of her research at the AAHB conference on Monday, March 11, and a poster presentation the following day.

The early-career award from the AAHB is the latest accolade for Merianos, who has garnered national and international media attention for her research on child secondhand and thirdhand smoke exposure. Her work has been featured in online and print media outlets including The New York Times, ABC News and Yahoo News. Merianos has received early career awards from UC and professional organizations.

Provided by University of Cincinnati

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