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Am J Med. 2017 Nov 17. pii: S0002-9343(17)31185-3. doi: 10.1016/j.amjmed.2017.11.005. [Epub ahead of print]

## Initiation of Traditional Cigarette Smoking after Electronic Cigarette Use among Tobacco-Naïve U.S. Young Adults.

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### Abstract

**BACKGROUND:** While electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) may help some smokers quit, some young adult never-smokers are now using e-cigarettes recreationally, potentially increasing their risk for initiation of smoking. We aimed to determine the association between baseline e-cigarette use and subsequent initiation of cigarette smoking among initially never-smoking young adults.

**METHODS:** We conducted a prospective cohort study with assessments at baseline (March 2013) and follow-up (October 2014). We used sampling frames representing 97% of the U.S. population to recruit a nationally-representative sample of never-smoking young adults ages 18-30. The independent variable was baseline ever use of e-cigarettes. The main outcome measure was initiation of traditional cigarette smoking between baseline and 18-month follow-up.

**RESULTS:** Baseline surveys were completed by 1506 never-smoking young adults, of whom 915 (60.8%) completed follow-up. There were no demographic differences between responders and non-responders. After applying survey weights-which accounted for both non-response and over or under coverage-2.5% of the represented population of never-smokers (801,010 of 32,040,393) used e-cigarettes at baseline. Cigarette smoking was initiated by 47.7% of e-cigarette users and 10.2% of non-users (P=.001). In fully-adjusted multivariable models, e-cigarette use at baseline was independently associated with initiation of smoking at 18 months (adjusted odds ratio=6.8, 95% confidence interval=1.7-28.3). Results remained similar in magnitude and statistically significant in all sensitivity analyses.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Baseline e-cigarette use was independently associated with initiation of traditional cigarette smoking at 18 months. This finding supports policy and educational interventions designed to decrease use of e-cigarettes among non-smokers.

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**KEYWORDS:** Electronic nicotine delivery devices; harm reduction; nicotine; priority/special populations

PMID: 29242110 DOI: [10.1016/j.amjmed.2017.11.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2017.11.005)

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