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Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/421813nc

Journal

Annual Reviews of Public Health, 39

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Publication Date

2018-04-01

Peer reviewed

E-Cigarettes: Use, Effects on Smoking, Risks, and Policy Implications

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Abstract

Since e-cigarettes appeared in the mid-2000s, some practitioners, researchers, and policy makers have embraced them as a safer alternative to conventional cigarettes and an effective way to stop smoking. While e-cigarettes deliver lower levels of carcinogens than do conventional cigarettes, they still expose users to high levels of ultrafine particles and other toxins that may substantially increase cardiovascular and noncancer lung disease risks, which account for more than half of all smoking-caused deaths, at rates similar to conventional cigarettes. Moreover, rather than stimulating smokers to switch from conventional cigarettes to less dangerous e-cigarettes or quitting altogether, e-cigarettes are reducing smoking cessation rates and expanding the nicotine market by attracting youth.