

Undesirable events during electronic cigarette use prior to the implementation of Article 20 of the European Union Tobacco Products Directive: Findings from the EUREST-PLUS ITC Europe Surveys

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Introduction

Article 20 of the European Union (EU) Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) sets forth provisions on electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) product regulation, such as child-proof packaging and protection against e-liquid refilling without leakage. The aim of the current study was to examine frequencies and correlates of experiencing undesirable events during e-cigarette use related to e-cigarette product design parameters prior to the implementation of the EU TPD.

Methods

The EUREST-PLUS ITC Europe Wave 1 survey was conducted with adult cigarette smokers from June to September 2016 across Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Spain.

Results

Among our sample of adult cigarette smokers, one in five reported having ever used e-cigarettes. Prevalence of current

e-cigarette use (daily or weekly) was very low (1.5%). Major undesirable events, such as battery exploding or catching fire (1.9%) or overheating (11%) were uncommon. Among those reporting at least monthly use and whose usual/current brand has a tank that you fill with liquids, 18.8% experienced spilling during refill and 18.5% experienced e-liquid leaking during use. Nearly one-quarter reported that the e-liquid cap was easy for a child to open.

Conclusions

In light of the EU TPD establishing standards around e-cigarette design parameters to mitigate undesirable events and risks during e-cigarette use, these findings further support the need for its implementation, as well as for monitoring undesirable events experienced during e-cigarette use once Article 20 is fully implemented.

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