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Community Perception of Electronic Cigarettes and Their Role as Smoking Cessation Aids

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Community Perception of Electronic Cigarettes and Their Role as Smoking Cessation Aids

Addison Family Practice, Middlebury, VT

Alejandro Velez
September 2015
Mentor: Dr. Jessica Rouse
2: Problem Identification and Description of Need

- The prevalence of smokers in VT was highest among ages 25 to 44 at 22.9%.
- Around 22% of all high school students smoke on a regular basis (2004 statistics).
- The majority of smokers (60.4%) had at most a 12th grade education.
- The average of every day smokers that quit for at least one day in VT is less than the national average (49.6% vs. 52.2%).
3: Public Health Cost

- The tobacco industry spent $9.17 billion on marketing of cigarettes in 2012; 16.9 million in VT alone
- $170 billion were spent on providing medical care in smoking related illnesses
- Loss of productivity due to premature death and exposure to secondhand smoke totals nearly $150 billion each year
- Smoking costs the United States billions of dollars each year.
- State spending on tobacco prevention and control does not meet CDC-recommended levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current VT cigarette tax: $2.62 per pack (7th in the nation)</th>
<th>Smoking-caused health care costs in Vermont: $10.04 per pack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual health care expenditures in Vermont directly caused by tobacco use: $233 million</td>
<td>Smoking-caused state Medicaid program spending each year: $72 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4: Community Perspective on Electronic Cigarettes and Smoking Cessation

[Name Withheld] 802Quits Coach

- “We do not recommend electronic cigarettes to the people we coach as there is limited research and they are not yet FDA approved”
- The use of electronic cigarettes and regular cigarettes are “concurrently used...most often not as a smoking cessation aid”
- 802Quits does not believe that electronic cigarettes are a good smoking cessation aid due to the lack of FDA approval

Ed Lieberman, Behavioral Health Specialist and Smoking Cessation Counselor - Little City Family Practice

- The most popular smoking cessation aids/therapies: Wellbutrin, Chantix, Nicotine patches, CBT and Mindfulness training
- Around 5-10% of patients counseled by Ed have used e-cigs to attempt to quit
- “A small percentage [of patients that I counsel believe e-cigs are healthier/safer than cigarettes]; or they come in with many questions about efficacy”
- “[E-cigs are] Not my favorite approach, would like them to have all NRT (nicotine replacement therapy) option first...if they are very motivated to use them, I’ll work with that”
- Ed believes that e-cigs could be used as a smoking cessation aid: “if it is used in context of a comprehensive plan in which it is a step towards abstinence”
5: Intervention and Methodology

- Patients that self-reported smoking on a daily basis during an office visit were approached following the completion of the visit and asked to participate in a survey about electronic cigarettes.
- The patient fills out the survey and drops it off at the front desk or with a nurse.
- Whether they agreed to take the survey or not, the patients were offered the electronic cigarette info-flyer.
6: Survey Results

• Every current daily cigarette smoker reported hearing about electronic cigarettes.
• One quarter of current daily cigarette smokers reported using or having used electronic cigarettes at one point.
• All of those that reported using electronic cigarettes in the past claimed that they were unlikely to continue to use them.
  • Those that used electronic cigarettes in the past stopped using them after an average of 6 months.
• Around half of current daily cigarette smokers that reported not using electronic cigarettes said they were likely to try electronic cigarettes.
• Of those that intend to quit smoking regular cigarettes in the next year, around 40% believed that electronic cigarettes can help them quit.
• Around ¼ of current daily cigarette smokers believed that electronic cigarettes were healthier than regular ones.
7: Evaluation of Effectiveness and Limitations

Information poster:
- The information will be outdated as more studies are published.
- Informational flyer was only given to survey participants. A greater impact can be made with in-room posters and handouts for patients to take.
- The information was welcomed and posed in an objective manner.

Survey:
- The number of people surveyed was too low to make major conclusions or statistical calculations.
- Not anonymous which could add a confounding factor.
- Extending the survey to other community practices in the area would give us better sampling of the local population.
8: Recommendations for Future Projects

• Increase the number of people surveyed to get a better sense of the public’s perception on electronic cigarettes
• Make the survey completely private/anonymous
• Distribute survey to all patients regardless of stated smoking habits
• Include a question on current/previous use of smoking cessation aids
• Include a question to identify sources of information that patients use regarding electronic cigarettes
• Acquire and distribute smoking cessation aid materials to all patients that take the survey including information about electronic cigarettes
9: References


