

Health Beliefs regarding E-cigarettes in UCC

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Abstract

Introduction: It is estimated that over 210,000 Irish people use e-cigarettes. ⁽¹⁾ As the number of e-cigarette users grows, so too does the public debate surrounding these devices.

Aims: To assess prevalence of, and factors associated with, e-cigarette awareness, use, and beliefs among the population of University College Cork.

Methods: An email was sent to all UCC staff and students with an invitation to complete an online survey. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS Statistics ® V22.0.

Results: Total sample size was 1285. 96.9% of respondents were aware of e-cigarettes. 32.2% reported ever use, while 4.5% were regular users. The most common reasons for use were Curiosity (69.5%), Help Quit Smoking (27.9%) and Less Harmful than Cigarettes (23.1%). E-cigarette use was significantly associated with male gender; age under 45; and smoking ($P=0.001$). 4.6% of ever users were never smokers. 48.3% of respondents believed that e-cigarettes are a gateway to smoking. More than half (58.7%) perceived e-cigarettes as less harmful than cigarettes, while 47.2% believed e-cigarettes aid smoking cessation.

Conclusion: E-cigarette awareness among this population was nearly universal. Notably, almost one third of respondents had previously used an e-cigarette. Many respondents believed that e-cigarettes help smoking cessation and are less harmful than cigarettes.

1. E-cigarettes in Ireland, research commissioned by the Irish Cancer Society. 2015 [cited 15 November 2015]. Available from: <http://www.cancer.ie/content/two-three-e-cigarette-users-are-also-smoking-tobacco#sthash.KV5AGWaI.ofjdMYcv.dpbs>