# The impact of exposure to e-cigarette adverts on appeal of tobacco smoking in children

Submission date	Recruitment status	[X] Prospectively registered		
29/04/2015	No longer recruiting	☐ Protocol		
Registration date	Overall study status	Statistical analysis plan		
29/04/2015	Completed	[X] Results		
Last Edited	Condition category	Individual participant data		
26/01/2018	Mental and Behavioural Disorders			

#### Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

The availability and use of electronic ("e") cigarettes has risen rapidly in the last three years with an estimated 2.1 million people using e-cigarettes in the UK in 2014 and 15.7 million in the USA in 2013. E-cigarettes have the potential to be both beneficial and harmful. The main potential benefit is that they may help current smokers to stop using tobacco cigarettes. The main potential harm is that they may encourage children to start using tobacco cigarettes through the presentation of glamorous images associated with objects that resemble cigarettes. In this study, we look at whether exposing children to adverts depicting e-cigarettes as glamorous increases the appeal of tobacco smoking, appeal being a predictor of subsequent tobacco use. We also look at whether exposing participants to adverts emphasizing the potential health benefits of e-cigarettes reduces the appeal of tobacco smoking.

Who can participate?

Young people aged 11-16 from the UK.

#### What does the study involve?

Participants are randomly allocated to one of three groups. Those in group one are shown a series of pictures associating e-cigarettes with glamour. Those in group two are shown a series of pictures associating e-cigarettes with potential health benefits and an aid to stop smoking tobacco cigarettes. Those in group 3 are not shown any pictures (control group). All participates are asked to fill in a questionnaire and are asked some questions on their responses to the advertisements and how appealing they find tobacco and e-cigarettes. They also answer some questions about their own experiences with e-cigarettes and tobacco cigarettes.

What are possible benefits and risks of participating?

The public health community has raised concerns that e-cigarette adverts might influence how appealing children find tobacco, but currently evidence is lacking. The present study will contribute to a better understanding of how children perceive e-cigarette adverts and whether and how these adverts might influence the appeal of tobacco smoking in children. The present study will contribute to evidence that can form the basis for policy aimed at protecting children. We do not envisage the study will result in any anxiety or discomfort.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for? May 2015 to July 2015.

Where is the study run from?

The Behaviour and Health Research Unit at the University of Cambridge in collaboration with ICM Direct.

Who is funding the study?

Department of Health Policy Research Programme (Policy Research Unit in Behaviour and Health (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Professor Theresa Marteau

# Contact information

## Type(s)

Scientific

#### Contact name

Prof Theresa Marteau

#### Contact details

University of Cambridge Institute of Public Health Forvie Site Cambridge United Kingdom CB2 0SR

# Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number N/A

# Study information

#### Scientific Title

Exposure to e-cigarette adverts and the appeal of tobacco smoking in children: an experimental study

#### **Study objectives**

There is growing concern about the marketing of e-cigarettes and in particular the potential for this to attract young children not just to e-cigarettes but also to tobacco smoking. Some e-cigarette adverts emphasise the glamorous aspects of using these products, and others emphasise their health benefits. Our primary hypothesis is that exposure of children to e-cigarette adverts that emphasise glamour increases the appeal of tobacco. Our secondary hypothesis is that exposure to adverts emphasizing the potential health benefits of e-cigarettes reduces the appeal of tobacco smoking.

#### Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

#### Ethics approval(s)

Cambridge Psychology Research Ethics Committee, 11/12/2014, ref: 014.103

#### Study design

A between-subjects experimental design in which participants are randomised to one of three groups differing in the exposure to e-cigarette adverts

#### Primary study design

Interventional

#### Study type(s)

Other

#### Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Tobacco smoking, which causes cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, stroke and heart disease

#### **Interventions**

Exposure to e-cigarette adverts in two of three groups:

- 1. Exposure to adverts associating e-cigarettes with glamour (e.g., attractive design, socially appealing, high tech)
- 2. Exposure to adverts associating e-cigarettes with function (e.g., health claims, aid to smoking cessation)
- 3. Exposure to no adverts (control)

#### Intervention Type

Behavioural

## Primary outcome(s)

The primary outcome is appeal towards smoking tobacco cigarettes

# Key secondary outcome(s))

- 1. Attitudes towards tobacco smoking
- 2. Susceptibility to tobacco smoking
- 3. Estimates of smoking rates among young people
- 4. Appeal of e-cigarettes
- 5. Attitudes towards e-cigarettes adverts

## Completion date

15/12/2015

# **Eligibility**

# Key inclusion criteria

The following inclusion criteria are applied:

- 1. Age: 11-16 years old
- 2. Gender: Both male and female participants are recruited

3. Location: Participants across the UK are recruited. However, only participants in selected sampling units (Super Output Areas; SOA) can participate, as per our sampling procedure

#### Participant type(s)

Healthy volunteer

# Healthy volunteers allowed

No

## Age group

Child

## Lower age limit

11 years

#### Upper age limit

16 years

#### Sex

All

### Key exclusion criteria

- 1. Age: participants aged younger than 11 or older than 16 years old
- 2. Location: Participants outside the selected UK SOAs

#### Date of first enrolment

01/05/2015

#### Date of final enrolment

13/06/2015

# Locations

#### Countries of recruitment

**United Kingdom** 

England

# Study participating centre Behaviour and Health Research Unit

University of Cambridge Institute of Public Health Forvie Site Cambridge United Kingdom CB2 0SR

# Sponsor information

#### Organisation

University of Cambridge

#### **ROR**

https://ror.org/013meh722

# Funder(s)

# Funder type

Government

#### **Funder Name**

Department of Health Policy Research Programme (PR-UN-0409-10109)

# **Results and Publications**

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

## IPD sharing plan summary

Not expected to be made available

## **Study outputs**

Output type	Details	Date created Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article	results	01/07/2017	Yes	No
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025 11/11/2025	No	Yes