

PRESS RELEASE

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HALF OF SMOKERS USING LIVERPOOL STOP SMOKING SERVICES USED E-CIGS

Over half the smokers using the Liverpool Stop Smoking Service have tried electronic cigarettes (51.3 per cent). Of these, nearly half had used them within the past month and are considered current users (45.5 per cent).

The data* – presented at the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference in Liverpool today (Tuesday) – also highlights that smokers are more likely to try e-cigarettes if they feel more confident that the products are safer than tobacco smoking.

Researchers from the University of Liverpool quizzed more than 320 smokers from the Roy Castle FagEnds study to understand the number of people who used e-cigarettes and what smokers thought about the products.

Smokers appear undecided towards e-cigarettes, possibly due to the widely documented uncertainties about safety and effectiveness in helping smokers to successfully break their addiction. Some also viewed using e-cigarettes as an extension of smoking and perceived them as an inferior tool for helping to quit smoking.

Generally e-cigarettes were viewed indifferently. But 20 of the smokers interviewed by phone viewed e-cigarettes negatively. Additionally, some participants were misinformed of or misunderstood the risks associated with e-cigarettes.

Frances Sherratt, lead author from the University of Liverpool, said: "Our results show that electronic cigarettes are commonly used by smokers wanting to quit and seek help through the Stop Smoking Services. Many smokers also viewed e-cigarettes negatively or indifferently as a way to stop smoking. This study highlights the need for better education regarding e-cigarettes, to enable smokers to make balanced, informed smoking cessation treatment decisions to help them quit."

Paula Chadwick, chief executive of Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation who helped fund the research, said: "While the research suggests that a high proportion of smokers try e-cigarettes as an aid to quitting, it also shows that many recognise their effectiveness is limited compared to more conventional, proven techniques.

"Lingering issues around their safety and long-term health impact also continue to affect public opinion. People are more likely to be successful with the tailored, one-to-one support of a quit smoking professional and this seems to have been understood by the majority of those surveyed."

Dr Karen Kennedy, Director of the NCRI, said: "This research provides an interesting insight into how many, and why, smokers use e-cigarettes. Tobacco is the single biggest cause of preventable cancer deaths, so understanding how smokers can be better helped in breaking the addiction is extremely valuable in reducing cancer deaths."

ENDS

For media enquiries please contact Paul Thorne on 0151 707 4642/3/4/5 or, out of hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264 059.

Notes to editors

Read the full abstract - * Sherratt F. et al, Examining electronic cigarette use within a UK Stop Smoking Service Conference abstract:

<http://conference.ncri.org.uk/abstracts/2014/abstracts/A146.html>

The researchers would like to acknowledge Liverpool Primary Care Trust / Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group and the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation for their support with this study.

About the NCR1

- The National Cancer Research Institute (NCR1) is a UK-wide partnership between the government, charity and industry. Its role is to promote cooperation in cancer research.
- NCR1 Partners are: the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; Children with Cancer UK; Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie Cancer Care; Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (Research & Development Office); Prostate Cancer UK; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates (Chief Scientist Office); Tenovus; Welsh Government (National Institute for Social Care and Health Research); Worldwide Cancer Research (formerly the Association for International Cancer Research); Wellcome Trust; and Yorkshire Cancer Research.
- For more information visit www.ncri.org.uk

About the NCR1 Cancer Conference

- The National Cancer Research Institute (NCR1) Cancer Conference is the UK's major forum for showcasing the best British and international cancer research.
- The Conference offers unique opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge by bringing together world-leading experts from all cancer research disciplines.
- The tenth NCR1 Cancer Conference is taking place from 2–5 November 2014 at the BT Convention Centre in Liverpool.
- For more information visit conference.ncri.org.uk