



Preface for the special series on “Tobacco and Addiction”

In this special series of the *Journal of Public Health and Emergency*, we delve into the intricate world of nicotine and addiction, drawing together a collection of articles that investigate the diverse aspects of these intertwined phenomena. As smoking and other forms of nicotine use continue to contribute to significant morbidity and mortality worldwide, it is imperative that the medical and scientific communities come together to better understand the underlying mechanisms, challenges, and potential interventions.

The articles in this series encompass a wide range of topics, including the unique aspects of vaping dependence, the role of e-cigarette product characteristics in addiction, the role of contraband cigarettes, and an examination of the role of religion in smoking cessation. By covering this breadth of research, we aim to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of nicotine and addiction, and inspire innovative strategies for prevention and treatment.

Two articles focus on the novel delivery mechanisms of nicotine through e-cigarettes. Maloney *et al.* (1) argue that more attention is needed on the product characteristics of e-cigarettes and how those characteristics contribute to addiction and smoking cessation. E-cigarettes and more generally electronic nicotine delivery systems are heterogeneous products. Different devices are able to deliver vastly different levels of plasma nicotine at different rates. For studies conducting randomized controlled trials, it is critical that these product characteristics be considered and more potent products used for the trials to maximize effectiveness. Beyond the effect on trials, consideration of product characteristics is important for monitoring and development of regulation that maximizes the use of e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation device and limiting the impact on never smoking youth. Sanchez *et al.* (2) similarly review the unique characteristics of e-cigarette devices—here with a focus on helping youth who want to quit e-cigarettes. This article notes that e-cigarettes have different product and social characteristics compared to smoking cigarettes. E-cigarettes are “discreet”—they can be easily hidden and used in many more situations that could cigarettes—and yet not “discrete” unlike cigarette where the unit dose, the cigarette, is easily identified, e-cigarettes can be used continuously. The combination of discreet yet not discrete means that users may be less aware of their level of addiction and efforts to identify the burden of addiction itself may be an effective intervention.

Ortiz-Prado *et al.* (3) examine the effect of smuggled cigarettes in Ecuador. In Ecuador, similar to other countries, smuggled cigarettes are an issue driven by the tobacco industry. Smuggling undermines the effects of tobacco control policies, reduces the price of cigarettes to users increasing use and the health burden. Tracking and tracing controls are needed to limit the sale of smuggled tobacco.

Finally, King *et al.* (4) take an in-depth look at the role of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in tobacco control. Use of tobacco is very low among members of the Church and there has been very limited research examining how religious institutions can contribute to lowering the burden of tobacco-related harms. This underexplored area shows how effectively religious institutions can effectively regulate tobacco use in a community.

In the quest to reduce the global burden of tobacco-related disease, it is essential to consider the multifaceted nature of nicotine addiction, which extends beyond the physiological and psychological dimensions to encompass social, cultural, and economic factors. By illuminating these complexities, this supplement seeks to foster a deeper appreciation of the challenges faced by individuals, communities, and policy makers in addressing nicotine addiction, and to stimulate further research and collaboration in this critical area of public health.

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