

Public Health

## E-Cigarettes in the Young Population A Severe Social Issue

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**E-cigarettes have gained notable popularity among youth in recent years, posing a serious societal issue that has elicited much concern from public health professionals and legislators. The increase in e-cigarette consumption among adolescents can be ascribed to assertive marketing strategies employed by corporations that focus on appealing to young consumers through flavored offerings and aesthetically pleasing designs. This rise is concerning because of the possible long-term health ramifications linked to vaping, such as nicotine addiction and exposure to hazardous chemicals found in numerous e-cigarette formulations. The normalization of e-cigarette usage in social contexts may result in heightened peer pressure and the endorsement of detrimental conduct. To properly address this issue, government agencies must enforce stronger rules on e-cigarette sales and marketing directed at minors, while schools and community organizations should educate youth about the risks of vaping.**

**Keywords:** E-cigarettes; Vaping; Young Population; Community; Sociology

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**I**N RECENT years, the popularity of e-cigarettes among young people has increased, prompting substantial apprehension regarding the potential social consequences of their use (Mattingly & Hart, 2024; Jackson et al., 2024). Despite the initial marketing of e-cigarettes as a safer alternative to traditional cigarettes, research has demonstrated that they continue to pose significant health risks, particularly for young consumers (Glantz et al., 2024; Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes, 2018; Smith et al., 2020).

The normalization of smoking behavior is one of the most alarming social issues associated with the use of e-cigarettes by

young people (Kramarow & Elgaddal, 2023). E-cigarettes are frequently marketed as socially acceptable and fashionable, which may make them more appealing to young people who may otherwise be discouraged by the stigma associated with traditional smoking (Chen et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024; Zavala-Arciniega et al., 2024). This normalization of smoking behavior has the potential to result in a rise in the overall use of tobacco among young people, as well as a reduction in the perceived harm of tobacco products.

The potential for addiction is another social issue associated with the use of e-cigarettes by young people (Chen et al.,

2024; Eastwood et al., 2015; The Harmful Consequences of Vaping: A Public Health Threat, 2020; Urgent action needed to protect children and prevent the uptake of e-cigarettes, 2024). Nicotine, which is extremely addictive and can result in dependence, is present in high concentrations in e-cigarettes (Chacón et al., 2024; Glantz et al., 2024; Mattingly & Hart, 2024). This can have severe consequences for young individuals, as nicotine addiction at a young age can have a long-term impact on their both physical and mental health (Jackson et al., 2024; Murthy, 2016; Oliver et al., 2023; Rayes et al., 2023).

The use of e-cigarettes by adolescents has been associated with an elevated risk of respiratory complications. Respiratory symptoms, including coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath, may result from the irritation of the lungs and airways by the compounds present in e-cigarettes (Chen et al., 2024; Costantino et al., 2024; Glantz et al., 2024; Jackson et al., 2024; Rigotti, 2024; Urgent action needed to protect children and prevent the uptake of e-cigarettes, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). The risk of developing respiratory conditions, such as asthma and bronchitis, can also be elevated by the prolonged use of e-cigarettes (Costantino et al., 2024; Daiber et al., 2023; Montjean et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2023).

In addition to the physical health hazards associated with e-cigarette use, there are also social implications to consider. Nicotine addiction can have a detrimental effect on cognitive function and focus, which can result in a decline in academic performance among young individuals who use e-cigarettes (Chacón et al., 2024; Daiber et al., 2023; Dove et al., 2024; Khouja et al., 2024). This can have both immediate and long-term repercussions for young individuals, as inadequate academic performance can restrict their future success and opportunities.

Social isolation can be a consequence of the use of e-cigarettes by young individuals (Chacón et al., 2024; Jackson et al., 2024). There is a possibility that young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to engage in hazardous behaviors and isolate themselves from their peers who do not use these products (Mirbolouk et al., 2022; Oliver et al., 2023). This can exacerbate social issues among adolescent e-cigarette users by

inducing feelings of ostracism and loneliness.

The potential for experimentation with other substances is another social issue associated with the use of e-cigarettes by young people (Graham - DeMello et al., 2023; Khalaf et al., 2023). Studies have demonstrated that risky behaviors, such as alcohol and substance use, are more prevalent among young individuals who use e-cigarettes (Chacón et al., 2024; Mattingly & Hart, 2024). This can result in a cycle of addiction and additional social issues for young individuals who use e-cigarettes.

The relationships between young individuals and their family and acquaintances may be adversely affected by their use of e-cigarettes (Cambron, 2023; Fairman et al., 2023). Disapproval and criticism from loved ones may result in strained relationships and conflict for young individuals who use e-cigarettes (Mirbolouk et al., 2022; Oliver et al., 2023; Rayes et al., 2023). This can exacerbate the isolation of adolescent e-cigarette users and exacerbate feelings of alienation and loneliness.

The economic repercussions of e-cigarette use among young people may also be substantial (Bandara et al., 2023; Burt & Li, 2020; Green et al., 2020; Leslie, 2020). The rapid accumulation of the cost of e-cigarettes and related products may result in financial strain for young individuals who are already financially vulnerable (Smith et al., 2020; The Harmful Consequences of Vaping: A Public Health Threat, 2020). This may result in an elevated level of anxiety and tension, which can exacerbate social issues among adolescents who use e-cigarettes.

In sum, the use of e-cigarettes among the young populations poses significant social concerns that necessitate attention. The social consequences of e-cigarette use in young people are substantial and extensive, ranging from the normalization of smoking behavior to the potential for addiction, respiratory issues, academic performance, social isolation, experimentation with other substances, relationship strain, and economic implications. It is pivotal that policymakers, healthcare professionals, and parents collaborate to safeguard the well-being of young people and promote healthier behaviors by preventing and addressing these social issues. ■

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