

# THE BUZZ

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## BRIAN PRIMACK, MD, PHD, DISCUSSES THE HARMFUL TREND OF VAPING AT CASAColumbia’s ADDICTION SPEAKER SERIES

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Before the introduction of e-cigarettes to the U.S. market in 2007, a series of enormously successful public health initiatives significantly reduced the rate of cigarette smoking. These initiatives also increased negative attitudes toward tobacco and nicotine products among young people in the U.S. But the introduction of e-cigarettes may be beginning to reverse this trend.

As part of CASAColumbia's new Addiction Speaker Series, in which leading experts present their latest findings, Brian Primack, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Medicine, Pediatrics and Clinical and Translational Science at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, discussed his research, published this week in the journal *JAMA Pediatrics* on e-cigarettes and the popular, yet harmful, trend of vaping.

### **Vaping appears to increase young people's risk of starting smoking**

Dr. Primack's research focused on the susceptibility of young people to smoking conventional cigarettes as a function of their use of e-cigarettes. Experts are concerned that youth – who otherwise might not become smokers – could be lured into trying cigarettes by first vaping nicotine, which is a highly addictive drug. These individuals were identified by responses to research surveys that indicated they would be very unlikely to start using conventional cigarettes, and therefore considered “non-susceptible” to smoking.

So what role did e-cigarette use play in these non-susceptible individuals' likelihood of smoking conventional cigarettes? Study participants stated that they would not try smoking cigarettes that year. However, Dr. Primack's research showed that young people who reported having used e-cigarettes were more than eight times as likely to start using conventional cigarettes as those who were not e-cigarette users.

### **Creating a new generation of smokers**

Dr. Primack says these findings are particularly concerning because thousands of young people who never intend to smoke conventional cigarettes, but decide to experiment with e-cigarettes, are putting themselves at risk for cigarette smoking and its deadly consequences.

Dr. Primack's research suggested that rather than protecting young people from cigarette use, e-cigarette use actually may be associated with an increase in the number of young people who smoke cigarettes.

This problem may be exacerbated by the many flavors used to enhance the enjoyment of e-cigarette use. Adolescents and young adults are known to be very susceptible to flavorings in dangerous products, which is why the U.S. Food and Drug Administration banned youth-oriented flavorings like cherry and chocolate from conventional cigarettes.

“A young person who is used to the taste of candy and sugar soda is more likely to be interested in a sugary wine cooler than a shot of bourbon,” said Dr. Primack. “Similarly, a young person who is naïve to nicotine and tobacco would probably be more likely to begin by experimenting with a mango flavored electronic cigarette, as opposed to a traditional non-flavored cigarette.”

However, what that young person does not realize is that this deceptively good-tasting and easy-to-use product is exposing them to one of the most addictive chemicals known to humans — nicotine. Therefore, e-cigarettes, frequently touted as a smoking cessation tool or a less harmful alternative to cigarettes, might just turn out to be the hook that lures young people back to tobacco use.

To learn more about the dangers associated with e-cigarette flavorings, check out an earlier blog post [here](#).



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**TAGS: E-cigarettes, Vaping, Nicotine, Addiction, Teens**

