

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**PERSPECTIVES ON E-CIGARETTE
AMONG YOUNG E-CIGARETTE
SMOKERS AND THE INTENTION
TO SWITCH TO CIGARETTE
SMOKING: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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Master of Medicine (Family Medicine)

May 2018

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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ABSTRACT

Smoking is a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases. With the uprising popularity of e-cigarette smoking among young adults, and the risk of switching to tobacco smoking from e-cigarette use, could dampen efforts towards smokefree generation by 2045. Evidence on reasons for e-cigarette smoking among young Malaysian adults and their intention of switching to cigarette smoking is scarce. Hence, this study aimed to explore reasons for e-cigarette smoking and intention to switch to cigarette smoking among young Malaysian adults who smoke e-cigarette. This study employed a qualitative exploratory case study design. Current e-cigarette smokers aged between 18 and 30 years who can speak either Malay or English language were recruited via purposive and snowball sampling through three e-cigarette shops in Shah Alam, Glenmarie and Sungai Buloh. In depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted from 1st April 2017 until 15th July 2017 using semi structured interview guide based on Theory of Planned Behavior. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and data were analysed using thematic analysis using the Nvivo 11 software. Fourteen IDIs were conducted to achieve data saturation. The participants were between 20 and 26 years old, with majority male participants (n=12, 86 %) and had tertiary education level (n=11, 78 %). All participants were Malay. Duration of e-cigarette use ranged between two and five years. Four themes emerged such as ‘harmless, flavorsome and handy’; ‘desirability’; ‘endorsement’ and ‘futile regulations’. The participants perceived that e-cigarette smoking is safe, non-addictive and an adjunct to quit smoking. Their social circle such as family members, peers and community approved e-cigarette smoking and influenced the uptake of e-cigarette smoking. The underregulation of e-cigarette smoking at public places, promotion and selling of e-cigarette become the facilitators for e-cigarette smoking among our participants. None of our participants had the intention to switch to cigarette smoking due to cigarette smoking is harmful and for having the intention to quit e-cigarette smoking completely. Facilitators perceived to promote switching include dissatisfaction with e-cigarette use, curiosity and loss of e-cigarette popularity. In conclusion, e-cigarette smoking is perceived as safe and non-addictive. This warrant effective dissemination of accurate information on e-cigarette smoking to young adults. Underregulation of e-cigarette advertising and selling; and labelling of e-liquid highlight the importance of regulations on e-cigarette smoking across sectors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I wish to thank God for giving me the opportunity to embark on my Master and for completing this long and challenging journey successfully. My gratitude and thanks go to my supervisor Dr Suraya Abdul Razak and my co-supervisors, Dr Khasnur Abd Malek and Dr Siti Munira Yasin.

Special thanks to my colleagues and friends for helping me with this project.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my family for their continuous support. This piece of victory is dedicated to all of you. Alhamdulillah.

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