

E-CIGARETTES BEFORE TOBACCO AMONG IRISH ADOLESCENTS

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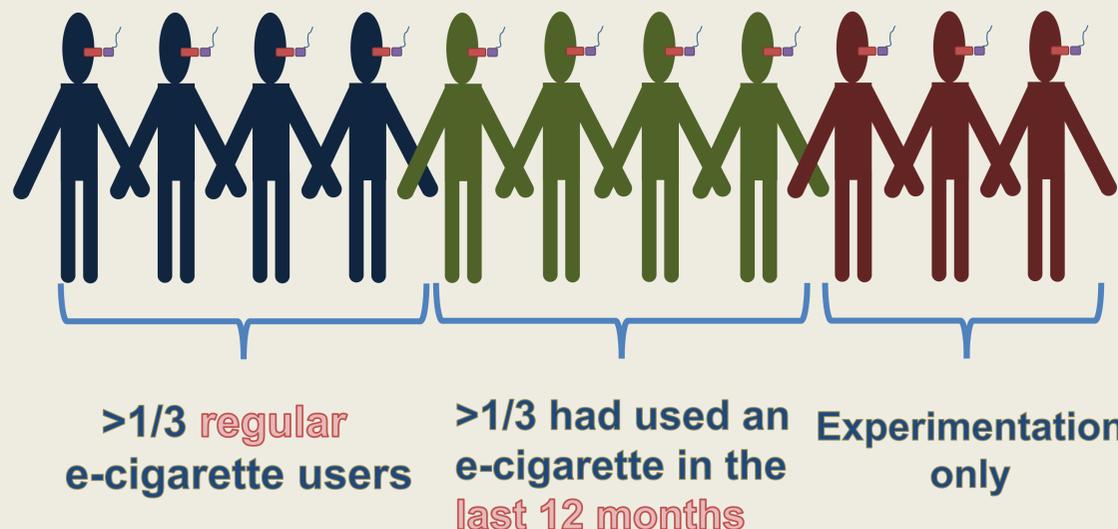
BACKGROUND

E-cigarettes are a new and controversial product, raising concerns about new forms of nicotine addiction and re-popularising smoking tobacco after decades of denormalisation policies. Following our recent paper on the prevalence of e-cigarette use (Babineau et al., 2015) and worries about a ‘gateway’ effect, there is a need to monitor adolescent e-cigarette use in Ireland.

DESIGN/METHODS

A cross-sectional, nationally-representative survey was conducted with 2028 young people aged 15-16 as part of the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD). This included several items on the use and age of initiation of e-cigarettes and tobacco.

Of 96 who had **ever** used an e-cigarette & **never** smoked tobacco

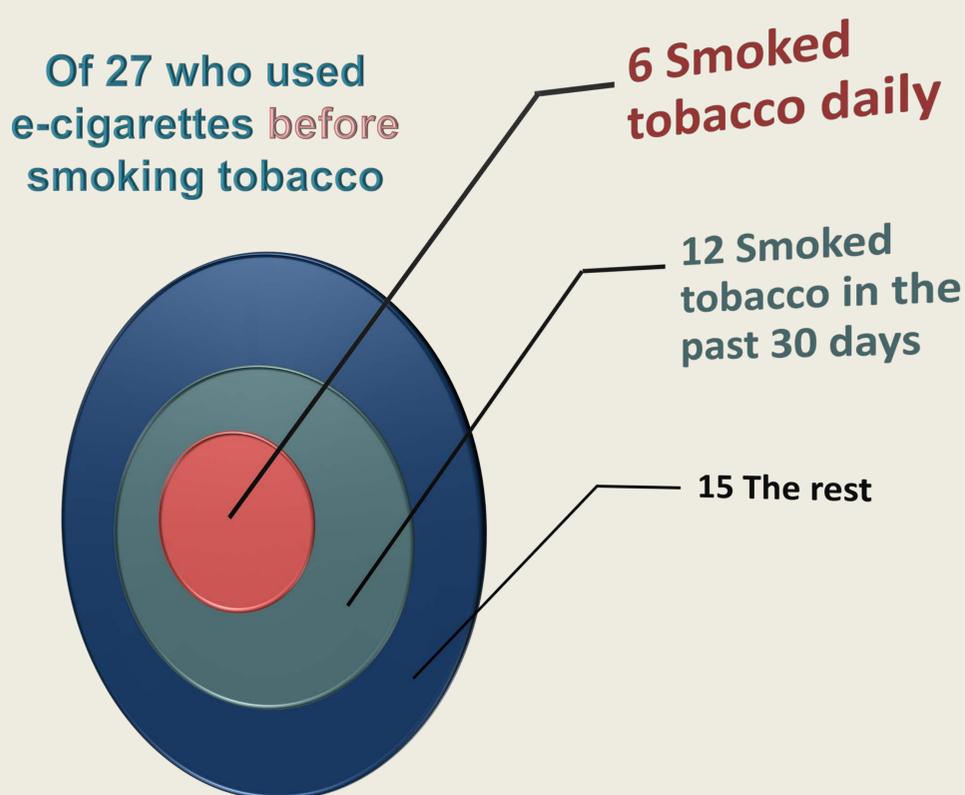


RESULTS

- 1) Of 96 students who had ever used an e-cigarette but had never smoked tobacco, more than a third (n=33) were regular e-cigarette users and another third (n=34) had used an e-cigarette in the last 12 months. This suggests that some e-cigarette users may maintain an e-cigarette habit, or nicotine addiction, without smoking tobacco.
- 2) Of 27 students who had used e-cigarettes before smoking tobacco, almost half had smoked tobacco in the past 30 days (n=12), including 6 students smoked daily. This suggests that e-cigarettes, for this small group, may have acted as a gateway to regular tobacco-smoking.

CONCLUSIONS

Some e-cigarette users may maintain an e-cigarette habit without smoking tobacco and, for a small number of respondents, e-cigarettes may have acted as a gateway to regular tobacco-smoking. Longitudinal research is needed to more effectively monitor trends and clarify further the relationships between e-cigarette and tobacco use.



Reference: Babineau et al., (2015) Electronic Cigarette Use among Irish Youth: A Cross Sectional Study of Prevalence and Associated Factors. PLoS ONE.

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