

THE NEED FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING

ACCESS

ASSUMPTION:

Convenience stores, and those retail locations that are not age-restricted, are the main source of vaping products for youth.

EVIDENCE:

Almost half of Canadian youth who ever tried a vapour product "reported that they borrowed, shared or bought them from a friend or relative. 23% bought them from a vape shop or vapour lounge and 12% from a convenience store or gas station."²



Convenience stores have a 96.2% compliance rate with age verification laws, up from 95.7% in 2017.³ This means the channel has a proven track record of selling age restricted products such as tobacco, lottery and in some cases alcohol. We hold ourselves to the same standard of compliance with vaping products.

ATTRACTIVENESS

ASSUMPTION:

Youth who vape will become smokers (the "gateway effect").

EVIDENCE:

A US study published in October 2017, involving survey data from 32,320 people found that vapers are primarily current or recent ex-smokers and refutes the claim that vaping attracts never smokers.^{8,9}

In a review of the literature on the gateway effect, Linda Bauld of Cancer Research UK and colleagues concluded that vaping products are not a gateway to smoking.¹⁰



EVIDENCE:



Display and communication at retail is not the main source of youth's exposure to vaping. In 2018, only 28% of Ontario youth were exposed to display and communications at convenience store locations.⁴

ASSUMPTION:

Youth become attracted to vaping products via advertising at convenience store locations.

ASSUMPTION:

Youth become attracted to vaping products via flavours.

EVIDENCE:

As of 2015, the only study that looked "at the preferences of young people for vapour flavours found extremely low interest. Teenagers were asked to rate their interest on a scale of 0-10 in using vapour products and were offered a list of flavours... They reported minimal interest (average = 0.41 out of 10), much less than adult smokers (1.73 out of 10) and interest did not vary much across flavours."^{5,6}



A balanced approach to the regulation of flavours is critical because, as the WHO highlights, "flavours also seem to play a role among adults and experienced vapour users in helping migration away from tobacco."⁷

We fully support laws and regulations that prohibit the sale of vapour products to anyone under the legal minimum age (minimum 18+ or higher if mandated by local law).

1 Youth: age 15-19

2 The Canadian Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Survey. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/2016-2017-summary.html>

3 In 2018, 19,679 mystery shopping checks were conducted by public health units in support of the Smoke Free Ontario Act (SFOA), and convenience stores were found to be 96.2% successful at denying sales to those under 19. Public Health Unit Inspections are conducted to check compliance of retailers selling tobacco. Pass rate is calculated from data obtained from the Ministry of the Attorney General on violations of Section 3 of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act: 3. (1) No person shall sell or supply tobacco to a person who is less than 19 years old. 1994, c. 10, s. 3 (1) Available at: <http://ontariocstores.ca/ontario-convenience-stores-show-theyre-ready-for-responsible-beer-and-wine-sales/>

4 Ontario Tobacco Research Unit October 2018. "Youth and Young Adult Vaping in Canada." Available at: https://www.otru.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/10/recigwp_project_news_oct2018.pdf

5 Bates, C. "E-cigarettes, Vaping and Public Health: A Summary for Policy-makers." Counterfactual Consulting and Advocacy, February 2015. Version 3

6 Shiffman, S.; Sembower, MA.; Pillitteri, J.L.; Gerlach, K. K.; and JG Gitchell. 2015. "The Impact of Flavor Descriptors on Nonsmoking Teens' and Adult Smokers' Interest in Electronic Cigarettes." Nicotine Tob Res 2015

7 WHO (2016), Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Electronic Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS/ENNDS) Report by WHO

8 Rodu, B.; and N. Plurphanswat. 2018. "E-cigarette Use Among US Adults: Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study." Nicotine & Tobacco Research, Volume 20, Issue 8, 9 July 2018, Pages 940-948

9 Public Health England (2018). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-cigarettes-and-heated-tobacco-products-evidence-review/evidence-review-of-e-cigarettes-and-heated-tobacco-products-2018-executive-summary#use-of-e-cigarettes-among-young-people>

10 Bauld L. et al. 2017. « Young People's Use of E-Cigarettes across the United Kingdom: Findings from Five Surveys 2015-2017.» Environ Res Public Health