



NINE REASONS WHY WE CELEBRATE HARM REDUCTION

Every year, on 30 May, the vaping community worldwide celebrates harm reduction efforts around the globe. The choice of date is not coincidental and falls just one day before the World No Tobacco Day proclaimed by the WHO: precisely to showcase that vaping and other harm reduction tools are one of the most efficient ways to help smokers quit.

Here are nine reasons why the vaping community celebrates harm reduction:

Reason 1: Vaping is 95% less harmful than smoking

According to Public Health England, consuming nicotine via vaping is 95% less harmful than smoking. Professor Peter Hajek from the Queen Mary University of London, an independent author of the review, is quoted saying:

"My reading of the evidence is that smokers who switch to vaping remove almost all the risks smoking poses to their health. Smokers differ in their needs, and I would advise them not to give up on e-cigarettes if they do not like the first one they try. It may take some experimentation with different products and e-liquids to find the right one."

Reason 2: Vaping is the most successful cessation tool

According to a 2019 study, vaping is more than twice as effective in helping smokers quit as other nicotine replacement therapies.

There is also no evidence showing that vaping leads users to smoke or is significantly used by the youth. Many vapers are ex-smokers who chose a less harmful alternative.

Reason 3: Through vaping, millions of lives could be saved

There are still millions of smokers in Europe, and every year around 700 000 people in Europe die due to smoke-induced cancer. Many of those lives could be saved if the EU and national parliaments embraced a harm reduction strategy based on access to safe vaping products and accurate information.



Reason 4: Many countries, like the UK and New Zealand, enacted laws that embrace vaping as a less harmful alternative

The examples of countries like the UK and New Zealand show the rationality of a smart harm reduction strategy. The evidence shows that countries that enacted a strategy open to vaping reduce smoking rates significantly faster.

According to the 2021 white paper of the Property Rights Alliance, the open approach allowed countries like the UK, New Zealand, France, and Canada an average smoking cessation rate of 3,6%, compared to the 1,5% world average, which can be attributed to the treatment of vaping on a legislative level.

Reason 5: Smokers who switch to vaping improve their health no matter if they keep consuming nicotine or not

A recent study on cardiovascular effects of switching from tobacco cigarettes to electronic cigarettes by professor Jacob George found that smokers who switch to vaping “demonstrate significant improvement in vascular health within one month,” and their health is improved no matter if they keep consuming nicotine or not.

To improve public health, smokers need to have access to all possible options to quit. This is already reflected in the UK’s approach to vaping and is successful.

Reason 6: Vaping is 70% more effective at helping smokers quit than nicotine replacement therapy

Vaping is a better quitting aid than traditional methods like patches and nicotine gums.

A 2020 review published by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), a public charity in the UK, revealed that smokers that use vaping are 70% more successful in quitting smoking than those who use other methods.

Dr Nick Hopkinson, the chair of ASH, urges his fellow physicians to embrace vaping and to encourage those patients who struggle to quit to try the e-cigarette:

“E-cigarettes can help those who might otherwise struggle to quit successfully. I would urge colleagues throughout the NHS to join me in encouraging those smokers who could benefit from trying to use an e-cigarette. The more smokers we can get to quit today, the fewer people will be in our clinics and hospitals tomorrow.”

Reason 7: 100 public health experts say vaping is ‘a driver of smoking cessation’

In a public letter from 100 experts in nicotine science, policy and practice, the specialists called the authorities to acknowledge the overwhelming evidence and urge the WHO to include harm



reduction strategies, especially new technologies like e-cigarettes, into the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Trial evidence, observational studies, population trends, and market data clearly show that vaping is a driver of smoking cessation.

The experts, among them acclaimed academics and physicians, warned the WHO that a conservative approach toward vaping might backfire, citing the evidence from the Royal College of London (2016):

“The danger of this approach is that it forms a de facto regulatory protection of the cigarette trade and will, to quote the Royal College, cause harm by perpetuating smoking.”

Reason 8: 15 former presidents of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco acknowledge that vaping is much safer than smoking

In the 2021 study on balancing consideration of the risks and benefits of e-cigarettes, 15 health experts urged the media, public and policymakers to acknowledge the dangers that vaping and e-cigarettes pose for the public health:

“Because evidence indicates that e-cigarette use can increase the odds of quitting smoking, many scientists, including this essay’s authors, encourage the health community, media, and policymakers to more carefully weigh vaping’s potential to reduce adult smoking-attributable mortality.”

Evidence proves that vaping is sustainably safer than smoking and helps smokers quit.

Reason 9: Countries that embrace vaping reduce smoking twice as fast as the global average

In the United Kingdom, the government’s liberal approach to vaping has led to a significant reduction in smoking rates (3.6% compared to the global average of 1.5%). Similar success can be seen in other countries: New Zealand, with its relatively unregulated e-cigarette markets, has a cessation rate of 3,2%, France - 3,7%, and Canada with 4,0% aimed even higher.

More countries need to embrace harm reduction policies. For this reason, every year, on 30 May, the vaping community will celebrate harm reduction efforts to deliver our shared message: vaping saves lives.