



20/08/2023

Reference: 36258714

Subject: National Taskforce to deal with the harms of electronic cigarettes - an action plan for all tobacco and smoking products

At the months of May and June, a national taskforce convened to deal with the harms of electronic cigarettes. The creation of the team has taken place following the hospitalization of two teenagers due to the use of an electronic cigarette, with the death of one of them, with the understanding that an immediate national action plan must be formulated to combat the harms of electronic cigarettes.

The team included partners from many fields: government ministries, civil society, youth representation, parent representation, local government, Clinicians, academia and other professionals.

The team worked on a short and efficient schedule in four sub-teams: policy, enforcement, advocacy, training & influence. The goal was to formulate a document of recommendations to deal with the harms of tobacco and smoking products and presenting action alternatives to the Director General of the Ministry of Health.

The Director General approved the recommendations that were formulated.

We invite the public and interested parties to comment on the document within two weeks from the date of publication.

The comments can be sent to the email address: h.promotion@MOH.GOV.IL , Department of Education and Health Promotion.

The team formulated several basic assumptions:

- Electronic cigarettes are the gateway to smoking for young people who start experimenting with them at a young age.
- There is no strong evidence that electronic cigarettes help in complete cessation from smoking in view of the risks involved in the use of electronic cigarettes and this compared to the proven safety of other means of secession such as smoking cessation workshops, chewing gum and nicotine patches and drug treatment.

- The scientific evidence on the health damage of electronic cigarettes in the short and medium term is known and are described in the literature as affecting the respiratory system, cardiovascular system, trauma and burns, the effect of nicotine on the brain the developing of the youth and the creation of addiction. It is already known that the use of electronic cigarettes among teenagers increases the risk of using dangerous drugs.
- In the years 2019-2020, approximately 2800 cases of EVALI and 68 deaths were observed in the United States alone. Some of which have been linked to the adding of vitamin E-ACETATE, to the filling liquids along with other psychoactive substances.
- Significant studies are still needed to prove the long-term health consequences such as cancer and secondhand smoking.
- The World Health Organization recommended measures to limit the use of electronic cigarettes to prevent addiction among young people. The recommended steps are presented within the framework of the MPOWER model. Different countries in the world take different regulation, starting with a ban on marketing and sales (total or partial), a ban on sales to minors, a ban on flavors, taxation and more. The legislation in Israel that applies to electronic cigarettes is one of the leading in the world as it already determines today comprehensive advertising ban, mandatory plain packs on the devices and filling liquids, health warnings and smoking ban in public places.
- Professionals in Israel consider all smoking products in general to be a real danger to public health, as well as the regulatory framework regarding smoking products is similar, for example the obligation on plain packaging and ban on advertising these products. In addition, and regarding electronic cigarettes only, a limit was set on the nicotine cap allowed in these products.
- Opinions among the experts regarding the "reduced damage" are divided.

Data

The rate of use of electronic cigarettes among teenagers in the world in general and in Israel is increasing and the recent partial data in Israel indicate usage rates of 3% in the 5th-6th grades and 10% in the 10th grades (at least six days a month) . At the same time, we see an increase in the smoking rates of regular cigarettes (at least one cigarette a day) from 4.8% in 2019 to 9% in 2022 (HBSC survey). We also see 4 times increase in smoking initiation among Israeli teenagers aged 12-14 in one year from 3.4% in 2021 to 13.7% in 2022 (survey made by The Smoke Free Israel Initiative organization).

Also, the rate of use of electronic cigarettes is higher than the use of regular cigarettes. 4.8% reported use electronic cigarettes at least six days in the last month compared to 3.9% who reported using Conventional cigarettes frequently similar. (HBSC survey - these data do not include the ultra-orthodox sector).

The HBSC data detailed in this section is partial, however based on a representative sample. Final HBSC survey data are expected to be published by the end of 2023.

According to OECD data, the usage rate of electronic cigarettes among children and teenagers is higher than the rate of use among adults.

According to the existing studies, we see that there is a decrease in experimentation with combustion products and an increase in experimentation with vapor products among the youth in Israel.

Goals

- Establishing a national goal of lowering the rate of smokers below 5% by 2035.
- The focus should be on preventing the start of smoking among teenagers regarding the use of tobacco and smoking products in general - conventional cigarettes, electronics, and hookah, at the policy level and at the advocacy level.
- Comprehensive legislative amendments must be made to protect the health of the public in general and the health of the youth in particular in order to prevent another generation that is increasingly addicted to behavior that will harm their health and the health of the environment.

Policy lines to be adopted in Israel considering the recommendations of the National Action Team

Legislative amendments to the Advertising prohibition and marketing restriction of tobacco and smoking products law:

Content

- Determining the ban of flavors - adding different types of flavors to smoking products increases their use, mainly among the youth and young people. A new American study states that banning flavors may lead to cessation of use among 70% of the youth and young people. In 39 countries in the world there is regulation that limits the use, production, and marketing of flavored smoking products, to reduce their increased use, which produces a faster and easier entry into the world of smoking. Giving powers to enforce the nicotine cap limit that exists today in the legislation (regarding electronic cigarettes) to the Ministry of Health – currently, there is a nicotine cap limit in electronic cigarettes of 20 mg/ml. The law should define powers for the Ministry of Health to enforce this limit. This means collecting samples at the import points and the points of sale and transferring them for examination in the public health laboratories of the Ministry of Health.

Appearance

- Applying graphical health warnings to all tobacco and smoking products - incorporating images that show the effect of smoking products on health and the harm of smoking is one of the ways that have been found to be particularly effective in discouraging the users of smoking products. The goal is to combine the graphical warnings together with the verbal warnings that currently exist on smoking products in Israel.
- Applying visual consistency to the smoking and vaping products (beyond the uniformity of the packs) - The law prohibiting advertising requires the marketing of smoking products in plain packs in color Pantone 448C (except for cigars and pipe tobacco). The law also applies to evaporation and heating. However, when taken out

of the plain pack, they are displayed in a different color which increases the attractiveness of their use. We suggest applying the color defined for the outer packaging, also on the products themselves.

Sale

- Ban on the sale of disposable electronic cigarettes - disposable electronic cigarettes are a closed system which contains a filling liquid for one-time use in a variable number of inhalations when in Israel we see products that contain up to 7000 inhalations in one product. According to the data presented to the team, the rates of use of disposable electronic cigarettes are higher than those of reusable electronic cigarettes and they increase significantly during the teenage years of life.
- Selling tobacco and smoking products in designated stores only and reducing the number of points of sale - according to the current law, there is no restriction regarding the place of sale of tobacco and smoking products, but only restrictions related to the method of sale. According to assessment of The Smoke Free Israel Initiative organization, there are about 13,000 points of sale of smoking products nationwide. A legislative change is proposed, limiting the points of sale to sales in designated stores only, those that sell smoking products, or smoking products and intoxicating drinks only, intended for a specific target audience. Along with the restriction on sales in designated stores, efforts must be made to reduce their number. The goal is to limit the exposure of teenagers and young people to these products in the places where they are currently sold and to carry out more effective enforcement of the existing legislation considering the limited number of the points of sale.
- raise the selling age to 21 - according to the current law, the sale of tobacco and smoking products is prohibited to those under the age of 18. There are several countries in the world, including the United States, which have raised the permitted sales age to 21, and we believe that this is another significant and important step in preventing the exposure of teenagers to tobacco and smoking products. Many young people in Israel start smoking during their military service. We believe that in view of this situation it is even more correct to raise the age of sale in Israel to 21 so that as a country we will help the young people who enlist in the IDF to maintain their health during this period.
- Giving the Ministry of Health the authority to enforce a ban on online advertising - according to the law today, any advertisement for smoking products is prohibited, including the internet. Tools are required. We are asking the Ministry of Health for authority to enforce the publication of all products online to prevent easy and accessible exposure.

Taxation:

- Comparing taxation on electronic cigarettes and other tobacco products - taxation is one of the most effective ways to reduce consumption mainly among price-sensitive populations and especially among the youth. The position of the Ministry of Health as of 2019 was that equal taxation should be applied to all tobacco and smoking products. In the latest amendment to the "goods" taxation decree, it was decided for

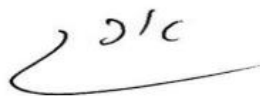
a significant reduction in the tax applied to electronic cigarettes and refill liquids, which stands at 145%. We ask to amend the decree and compare the taxation to the current tax on other tobacco products at the level of 270%.

- Applying taxation to nicotine intended for non-medical use - according to the reports of the Tax Authority, there is evidence on the ground that the electronic cigarette importers import the nicotine as a separate liquid that is used as part of the filling liquid components of the evaporation product. Today there is no taxation on nicotine liquid at all and we believe that such taxation would create a deterrent for the importers and will prevent accelerated self-assembly in the market.
- Applying taxation to the device itself - as part of the current taxation decree, there is no taxation on the electronic cigarette devices in the open systems. This, combined with the absence of taxation on nicotine and a reduced tax on refill liquids, encourages the purchase of smoking products in the open systems. Applying a tax on the equipment itself is expected to reduce the purchase.

Content:

Limiting the volume of the filling liquid allowed for import, marketing and sale - according to the position paper of the Ministry of Health published in 2019, the maximum volume limitation of the filling liquid bottles to 10 ml should be adopted from the European directive. This is considering the existing volumes of filling liquid bottles that may reach hundreds of ml per bottle.

The undersigned,



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