

# Ethnic minorities in England less likely to report using e-cigarettes to reduce smoking

*Peer reviewed: Yes*

*Type of study: Survey*

*Subject of study: People*

*Funding: Charity/NGO and government/research council*

Ethnic minority groups may be missing out on a means of reducing smoking. A household survey in England has found it is less common for smokers of Asian, Arab, and other ethnicities to use e-cigarettes to try to reduce their cigarette consumption or when they are not allowed to smoke than those of White ethnicity.

This comparative underuse of e-cigarettes is important because ethnic minority groups in England appear to be at higher risk of smoking-related diseases. NICE guidance says that reducing smoking prevalence could reduce those health inequalities more than any other measure.

The report, published today in the scientific journal *Addiction*, draws on data from UCL's Smoking Toolkit Study (a monthly household survey) from April 2013 to September 2019. Participants who were current smokers self-reported their ethnicities and their use of e-cigarettes to try to help them cut down on their smoking or when they are not allowed to smoke (temporary abstinence).

Overall, 18.0% (n=4,409) of current smokers surveyed reported using e-cigarettes or nicotine replacement therapy for cutting down and temporary abstinence. Within this group, the odds of e-cigarette use were 26% lower among smokers of Asian ethnicity and 49% lower among those of Arab/other ethnicity compared with those of White ethnicity.

Says lead author Dr Emma Beard (UCL Behavioural Science and Health), "E-cigarettes are substantially less harmful than traditional cigarettes and can help smokers quit cigarettes. The best approach is to use e-cigarettes to quit smoking altogether but there is some evidence that using e-cigarettes to cut down on cigarette smoking may reduce smoking-related harm. Our study suggests that segments of the population that are at higher risk for smoking-related harm appear less likely to use e-cigarettes."

On a more optimistic note, the study found that the odds of nicotine replacement therapy use were 42% higher among people of mixed and multiple ethnicity compared with those of White ethnicity.

-- Ends --

For editors:

**This paper is free to download for one month** from the [Wiley Online Library](#) or by contacting Jean O'Reilly, Editorial Manager, *Addiction*, [jean@addictionjournal.org](mailto:jean@addictionjournal.org).

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**Full citation for article:** Beard E, Brown J, Jackson SE, Tattan-Birch H, and Shahab L (2021) Differences between ethnic groups in self-reported use of e-cigarettes and nicotine replacement therapy for cutting down and temporary abstinence: a cross-sectional population-level survey in England. *Addiction* 116: doi:10.1111/add.15431

**Funding:** The Smoking Toolkit Study is currently primarily funded by Cancer Research UK (C1417/A14135; C36048/A11654; C44576/A19501) and has previously also been funded by Pfizer, GSK and the Department of Health.

***Addiction*** is a monthly international scientific journal publishing peer-reviewed research reports on alcohol, substances, tobacco, and gambling as well as editorials and other debate pieces. Owned by the Society for the Study of Addiction, it has been in continuous publication since 1884.