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### Smoking Cessation Counseling Writing Assignment #1

A product commonly known as electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes have become widely used amongst teens and adults. More than 13 out of 100 high school students reported in 2014, to be current users of an e-cigarette. Nearly half of adults who quit smoking had tried electronic cigarettes and a little over 20% of them currently use one. These are numbers and statistics from 2014, and without a doubt, the usage of electronic cigarettes has increased since then (Gehrig, 2010). Marketing claims state that this product is safer and healthier than conventional cigarettes; 60% of teens believe that little to no harm comes from using electronic cigarettes. Many people overlook this alternative cigarette for having any negative effects, but in reality, it is just as dangerous as any other tobacco product out there (Arane & Goldman, 2016). For this essay, I will explain why I chose this product and how it can negatively affect its' users, importance of smoking counseling and discussing this with teenagers and adults, and finally, a reflection after researching and learning about this cigarette and other tobacco related products.

First, I would like to discuss the negative effects of electronic cigarettes, why they are bad, and what makes them bad for current e-cig users. I decided to focus specifically on electronic cigarettes out of the other choices because there is always that common fallacy which surrounds this product: electronic cigarettes are safer and healthier than conventional cigarettes or other tobacco products. By no means should anyone be encouraged to try, or continue using it, even if this remains true to a certain extent (Arane & Goldman, 2016). Electronic cigarettes don't contain as many harmful chemicals and substances in comparison to actual cigarettes, but they still contain various debilitating ingredients such as, Nicotine, Diacetyl, Benzene, carcinogens, heavy metals like nickel, tin, as well as lead, and in some cases, diethylene glycol, a chemical that can be found in antifreeze (Gehrig, 2010). These harmful chemicals do affect both the user's oral hygiene and their systemic health. For example, Diacetyl is associated with lung diseases and other respiratory problems. The heavy metals I listed can also induce further respiratory difficulties. Constant inhalation of benzene may cause cancer, and of course nicotine just causes the user to become more addicted, thus continuing inhaling these harmful chemicals/substances. The list doesn't end there because each brand may add their own ingredients into the liquid for vaping, nonetheless, these chemicals tend to debilitate one's health when inhaled (Callahan-Lyon). As for how the product can affect oral hygiene, electronic cigarettes will almost always be purchased containing some sort of flavoring. These flavorings are composed of glycol, glycerin, sucrose, and ethyl maltol. Vapors composed of these components are going to be dense, sugary, and viscous like. They can easily cause complications to the lungs as well as form dental caries, or other periodontal diseases associated with high sugar intakes (Breland, 2017). Use of electronic cigarettes negatively impacts both the health system and the oral system, because of the harmful chemicals and substances that reside in vaping liquids.

Second, I want to explain the importance of smoking counseling during dental hygiene visits, and how to discuss this smoking situation to both teenagers and adults. To begin, I consider smoking counseling to patients during dental hygiene visits to be of utmost importance. Nicotine for one thing, leads to addiction. Addiction causes the user to feel an urge, or insatiable craving, for obtaining more nicotine in their body. Without enough nicotine in their bloodstreams, users can start feeling anxiety, physical symptoms, and behavioral changes. As a matter of fact, all tobacco products contain nicotine, and the electronic cigarette is no exception. And because of all the harmful chemicals and substances in the electronic cigarette, smoking and the periodontium go hand and hand with one another; the more someone smokes the more periodontal diseases arise from the oral cavity. Excessive and continuous smoking leads to periodontitis or tooth loss, and gingivitis (Rouabhia, 2020). Patients who come into the dental clinic mainly wish for clean, healthy, and strong teeth, but smoking does the complete opposite. Which is why it is of utmost importance to inform patients during their dental hygiene visits, not just on their oral cavity, but their overall health, if they smoke or want to. Should I consult with a teenager who recently started smoking 2 months ago, I would tell them the exact same information. In addition, I would mention that adolescents are more susceptible to addiction and to the effects of nicotine. However, because the brain doesn't fully develop until the age of 25, intake of nicotine may lead to impairment of brain and cognitive functions. Also, nicotine withdrawal is extremely difficult to achieve, and even nicotine withdrawals have their side effects such as behavioral and physical changes (Arane & Goldman, 2016). I would explain these consequences to the teen patient and hopefully they will be able to change their mind and stop smoking/vaping. As for an adult who has been smoking for 12 years, I will also explain to them that continuous usage of tobacco products, even electronic cigarettes, will eventually take a toll on their overall health and their oral hygiene. I will most likely suggest nicotine patches and to consult with a doctor before starting a treatment plan or regiment for them. I would articulate the negative impact that tobacco products have on the user and to those around them, for example, secondhand smoking and third hand smoking (Gehrig, 2010). Smoking is also considered a teratogen, which may lead to fetal alcohol syndrome or other defects on their infants, if the patient is, or is around someone who's, pregnant. Patients should be informed of these consequences due to smoking regardless of age and gender. Smoking can negatively impact their health and the well-being of others around them.

Lastly, after all the research and learning obtained about smoking and tobacco products, I definitely am more knowledgeable about the negative side effects, medical conditions, the targeted consumers, and its impact on the oral cavity, than I was before beginning this assignment. Tobacco truly is a scary product and it's even scarier thinking that quite a number of users are youths. If they don't protect and watch over their health and oral hygiene, a small condition now, will eventually exacerbate into a severe or life-threatening condition in the future. This assignment is beneficial, and because I chose electronic cigarettes, I was not prepared to read so much about the negative effects vaping can do to one's health. A while ago, when electronic cigarettes became popular in my high school, I too, thought they were harmless, and the vapor wouldn't detriment anyone's health. Reading about nicotine, nicotine withdrawal, addiction, and all those harmful ingredients within an electronic cigarette, it made me realize just how dangerous these products really are. I am grateful that I never got into vaping and refused when my friends peer-pressured me to try an electronic cigarette. Thankfully, none of my family members smoke; however, I do know friends who smoke and have told me that it's difficult to quit. One friend in particular tried nicotine patch, but he failed several times because the nicotine addiction was just too strong. In the end, he did quit smoking and I am grateful that he ceased to smoke. The process was arduous and

took a couple of years since he was on and off the patches. I feel that after knowing all this information, I would be quite comfortable talking to a patient about the effects and impact of tobacco products and try to convince them to cease smoking. No matter what the tobacco product is, be it cigars, water pipes, smokeless tobacco, or electronic cigarettes, they do the body no good and should be avoided or prevented, so the patient can live a good quality life and have a clean and healthy set of teeth.

To conclude, for this assignment I explained what my chosen tobacco product is, what it can do to its users, along with the importance of smoking cessation and disclosing important information to both teens and adults. I then articulated my thoughts and opinions as part of my reflection portion. This was a very great learning experience, to be able to research, read, write, and then apply this newly obtained knowledge to clinic and seminar, and in the near future, pass it on to my patients.

## References

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