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Den 1110/ Smoking Cessation Counseling
October 26 2021
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The Related Health Risks of Smoking E-cigarettes and Cessation Counseling

With the development of science and technology in recent years, cigarettes have also adapted to a new look. People gradually abandon the strong-smelling cigarettes and switch to electronic cigarettes. Social media and online platforms are flooded with various e-cigarette advertisements. More and more young people and even minors start to use e-cigarettes. Electronic cigarettes have become a trend. The article, *The E-cigarette Social Environment, E-cigarette Use, and Susceptibility to Cigarette Smoking*, provided data which showed a decreased use of cigarettes yet an increased use of electronic cigarettes among high school students, “cigarette use among high school students has continued to decline in recent years, from 15.8% in 2011 to 9.2% in 2014, whereas the prevalence of current electronic (e-) cigarette use has increased markedly from 1.5% in 2011 to 13.4% in 2014” (Barrington-Trimis 2016). Since high school, some classmates around me have started to use e-cigarettes. Its high-tech appearance, convenient usage, and various novel flavors attract many young people to try it. According to the article, *The E-cigarette Social Environment, E-cigarette Use, and Susceptibility to Cigarette Smoking*, “ ‘Vaping’ refers to inhalation of the aerosol produced by electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes, or electronic vaporizers).” (Mehrad 2020); E-cigarettes also known as vape pens contain a mouthpiece, a battery, and a heating chamber. The electric heater would vaporize the nicotine, flavorings, and other chemicals. One can inhale the vaporized aerosol the same way as smoking regular cigarettes but without the need to light the cigarettes. I chose e-cigarettes as the topic because more people use them nowadays. E-cigarettes are currently unregulated by the FDA-- U.S. Food and Drug Administration. E-cigarettes users do not know the exact chemicals in vape pens nor do they fully recognize the harm e-cigarettes will cause to one’s body and organs. I also know people who started using e-cigarettes when they were middle schoolers because of the lack of regulation and education about this product. I want to learn more about this product and be able to educate people who might be current users or are tempted to try due to misleading advertisements and peer pressures.

There is no denying that using any type of tobacco products will raise the chance of developing systemic illness. Some smoking related illnesses are cancer, cardiovascular disease and lung disease. According to the book, *Patient assessment tutorials: A step-by-step guide for the dental hygienist*, “In particular, smoking has been linked to 90% of cases of lung cancer.” (Gehrig 2020), smoking is a direct and major cause of lung cancer. The inhalation of nicotine and other carcinogens pass the oral cavity and get into the lungs. In the article, *Lung Biopsy Findings in Severe Pulmonary Illness*, researchers conducted biopsies on eight people who are users of e-cigarettes and concluded, “The histopathology of acute pulmonary illness related to e-cigarette use (vaping) is characterized by acute lung injury patterns, supporting the contention that vaping can cause severe lung damage.” (Mehrad 2020). It is evident that smoking is a life-threatening action. Despite the fact that most smokers know the serious health problems that smoking will cause, many still underestimate the risk of smoking. As dental healthcare providers, it is important to identify, document, and counsel patients who are smokers during their visits; this is because nicotine is addictive and smokers often cannot quit without professional help. Dental

hygienists understand the harm of smoking. By identifying and counseling patients who are smokers, dental healthcare providers will be able to educate patients on the negative impacts of tobacco use and are able to assist patients who are willing to quit.

E-cigarettes or any tobacco products are addictive. This is because of the chemical, nicotine, that is found in all tobacco products. Nicotine dependence is a condition in which patients experience withdrawal symptoms when they stop the intake of nicotine products. The article, *Dual cigarette and e-cigarette use in cancer survivors: an analysis using Population Assessment of Tobacco Health*, researchers described the harms of using e-cigarettes and suggested clinicians can help by counseling and explaining the negative impacts of smoking with patients, “By discussing that the efficacy and harms of e-cigarette use in smoking cessation ...clinicians may help counter patient perceptions that e-cigarettes will help them quit...”(Symes 2019). Patients need to know there are many effective nicotine dependence treatments. A teenager who just started smoking two months ago might not form a severe dependence on nicotine yet. In comparison, 30 years-old patients with smoking histories for twelve years have developed a stronger dependence on nicotine. They might have various reasons on why they started to smoke, thus the first thing a clinician should do, beside identifying tobacco users, is to inquire information about patients’ tobacco use; especially for teenagers, as they are easily influenced by others around them. Next, I would clearly explain the severe consequences, such as lung cancer, that smoking can bring. To the teenage patient who just started smoking, I would tell him/her that any amount of smoking will have a negative impact on your health and the earlier you quit the less harm will be done to your body; it is also easier to quit early because you are yet heavily dependent on nicotine. To the patient who has been smoking for twelve years, I would tell him/her that even if you stop smoking just for 24 hours your risk of getting a heart attack will immediately drop; your body will slowly repair when you stop smoking so it is never too late to stop. Lastly, if they are willing to stop smoking, a smoking cessation program will be recommended; they will learn some techniques on how to control craving--such as whistling or gum chewing.

This assignment is educational because smoking is a worldwide problem. As I mentioned in former paragraphs, many smokers know the negative impacts of tobacco uses but still underestimate the risk of smoking--I would say such underestimation also applies to non-smokers. Through this assignment, I now clearly understand the risk of smoking and learned that the minute you stop smoking your body will start to recover--it is never too late to quit. Most of my male family members smoke and they are all long-term smokers. I have never been so worried about my family members who smoke before researching and reading for this assignment. I always know smoking is bad for your health and second-hand smoke can cause serious health problems to those around a smoker but whenever I suggest my father to quit he would always try for a few days or even a few weeks but would always go back to smoking. I am now more educated on nicotine dependence and the difficulty of quitting; I feel more confident to have another discussion with my father and other family members who smoke because I know what I can do this time to help them rather than just telling them smoking is bad.

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