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Slow Death by Smoking and Vaping

Tobacco is one of the greatest threats to global public health. Tobacco use is one of the main factors contributing to many oral and medical conditions that can lead to various periodontal diseases. Smoking affects not only the person who smokes but also those around them. One adult dies from tobacco usage every eight seconds, killing 1 in 10 adults worldwide. Smoking is mainly linked to lung cancer cases in 78% of women and 90% of men. Smokers live 10-20 years less than non-smokers, most of whom will pass away before they reach middle age (Gehrer, 2018). Nowadays, there are several ways to consume tobacco. Electronic cigarettes are one of them.

Electronic cigarette use is a focal point of this essay because it has grown among young adults. Teenagers are seen smoking everywhere. The problem is getting worse because people see e-cigarettes as safer, healthier, and more acceptable alternatives. This is an ongoing craze that has spread around the world. It is regrettable because many develop an addiction at a young age. Electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, are devices that deliver nicotine doses and are powered by batteries, also known as e-hookahs, hookah pens, and vapor pens. They have gained popularity since their commercial introduction in 2006.

E-cigarettes are electronic devices that heat e-liquid to produce an aerosol that users inhale. Electronic cigarettes contain a lot of harmful ingredients. E-liquids contain nicotine, flavoring, propylene glycol, and glycerol as humectants as their main components. Smoking can have severe effects on the body and oral cavity. The chemicals in e-cigarettes cause permanent harm to those who inhale them. According to the article "What should every dental health professional know about electronic cigarettes?" e-cigarette users reported various symptoms that affected the lips, tongue, hard palate, and soft tissues. The most common signs reported were: burns, oral mucosal lesions, dryness, burning, irritation, bad taste pain, and bad breath (Briggs, 2021). E-cigarette use was linked to worsening periodontal health twice as often as non-smokers and suffering from cracked or broken teeth (Zee, K.-Y, 2009). As a result, these diseases can occur because of the flavoring and viscosity of e-liquids, which cause enamel to break down and make cariogenic bacteria stronger.

Systemic health is negatively impacted by smoking. Nicotine continues to play a role as a known risk factor for cancer, neurodegenerative diseases, and cardiopulmonary diseases. In 2019, several lung injuries and deaths were attributed to e-cigarette products in the United States (Briggs, 2021). Multiple cancers are known to be caused by smoking, which accounts for at least 30% of all cancer cases and approximately 163,700 deaths annually in the United States. The types of cancer linked to smoking are the lungs, mouth, nasal passages/nose, larynx, pharynx, breasts, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, bladder, kidneys, and cervix. Smoking contributes to at least 25% of all heart diseases and strokes and at least 90% of all chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases. However, smoking is a significant factor in abdominal aortic aneurysms,

cerebrovascular, peripheral vascular, and coronary artery diseases. Sudden infant death syndrome, low birth weight, abnormalities in the placenta, fetal heart defects, and spontaneous miscarriages are all linked to smoking during pregnancy. Also, smoking causes the skin's collagen and elastin to break down, resulting in undesirable changes or worsening of numerous skin diseases, including skin cancer. (Gehrer, 2018).

As a dental hygienist, I have the opportunity to inform my patients about all the effects smoking has on their oral health and the types of diseases they could face if they do not quit. Therefore, I must provide my patients with smoking cessation counseling and motivational interviews during dental hygiene appointments. It is essential for me to explain the advantages of maintaining a healthy mouth and overall health to avoid future illness and complications. In addition, if they desire to quit, my responsibility is to inspire, encourage, and provide treatment options. I will assist them by discussing the difficulties associated with quitting, the websites of the quitline, and any educational materials. Finally, patients who smoke should be aware of the significance of regular dental visits to minimize the risks of gum disease, periodontal disease, and oral cancer.

The majority of people start smoking when they are teenagers. It is complicated to explain a young people who began smoking two months ago the harmful effects of smoking on their health. Young people experience periods of anxiety, depression, family conflicts, and other issues. Teens are influenced to start smoking by various factors, including peer pressure, school, and family. Most of them look up to their parents, so if one or both of their parents smoke, they are more likely to start smoking. It can be challenging to educate teenagers on the health dangers of cigarette smoking because, at this age, they have a mind of their own. They disregard the oral healthcare provider's

recommendations. Teenagers place more importance on looking cool and being accepted by their friends than anything else. In 2019, high school and middle school students in the United States used e-cigarettes the most frequently. Flavorings were cited by 81% of current users as the cause of their addiction (Briggs, 2021). As a dental hygienist, I would like to know why this teen started smoking at such a young age. I am responsible for supporting, encouraging, and offering quitting methods, so this teenager can stop smoking before it becomes an addiction. Teens must know that smoking e-cigarettes can lead to cancer, diabetes, oral health issues, vision loss, and chronic respiratory disease. Moreover, it raises the risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer of the head and neck. To educate a teen about the harmful effects of smoking, it might be helpful to show images of the diseases and conditions caused by using e-cigarettes. Furthermore, I will emphasize the significance of maintaining good oral hygiene habits, such as brushing their teeth twice daily and seeing the dental hygienist every six months.

Educating an adult who is 30 years old and has been smoking for 12 years could be just as challenging as educating teenagers about smoking cessation. First, I would start by communicating my concern about my patient's health by asking and obtaining information about what tobacco product they are using or asking when was the last time they tried a tobacco product. Then, I will talk to them about oral health issues that they might face due to their 12-year smoking history. Afterward, I will advise and share information about the health benefits of stopping and its significance for his/ her overall health. I will encourage my patients that it is never too late to quit. Even for long-term smokers leaving carries significant and immediate health benefits. I will explain that smoking cessation is the most crucial step that they can take to increase the length and

quality of their lives. Smokers who quit smoking even at the age of 63 begin immediately with body repair. According to a study, most people's lung function improves by up to 30% in just two weeks. (Gehrer, 2018). I would make my patient feel comfortable by showing support. Due to the patient's years of smoking addiction, I would provide treatments for quitting and explain the significance of having a plan for oral hygiene. I would advise my patient to schedule a follow-up appointment to monitor the progress and address any concerns.

In conclusion, the use of electronic cigarettes is a brand-new worldwide trend. Although long-term research is still lacking, current evidence suggests that vaping has oral effects comparable to smoking cigarettes. To inform patients about this growing concern and social practice, there are possible repercussions for their oral and overall health. Dental professionals must keep up with the most recent research on tobacco use.

Reflection:

I had very little knowledge about the use of tobacco and the different ways of consuming it, such as electronic cigarettes. After reading Module 11 on tobacco cessation counseling and the three articles I selected, I feel prepared. I have the necessary information to educate my patients and help them quit smoking. I was shocked to learn about tobacco's chemicals and the harm they can cause to the oral cavity and overall health. I learned how important it is to know how harmful smoking can be and how to inform my patients using the five A's model for treating tobacco use and dependence to prevent long-term illness. In some instances, death can occur from using tobacco products.

This assignment benefited me because I am now more aware of the advantages of educating patients and assisting them in quitting smoking. As a future hygienist, one of my most important goals will be to inform patients about the adverse effects of smoking tobacco. It means a lot to me that I can make a difference in someone's life by providing support and accurate information regarding the health effects of smoking. I know what to say and what words of encouragement I can use to assist smokers in resisting cravings. After completing this essay, I feel comfortable conversing with future patients about smoking cessation. As a hygienist, I want my patients to understand smoking tobacco's risks and harmful effects and that quitting is never too late.

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