

1 messages

paul [REDACTED]

Press Release: "Two in three e-cigarette users are also smoking tobacco"

Paul [REDACTED]

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To: communications@irishcancer.ie

Bcc: [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

With regards to the recent press release "Two in three e-cigarette users are also smoking tobacco" published on cancer.ie on April 16th 2015, I would like to draw your attention to a few statements that may either be misinterpreted or considered fabrications.

>our research shows that using e-cigarettes may actually increase smokers' >dependence on nicotine

Thus far, current research does not support this supposition. Whilst there are still questions surrounding nicotine and any potential addictiveness, this statement can be interpreted as "nicotine is addictive".

>Without regulation, no medical or pharmaceutical advice is being given alongside the >purchase

I feel obliged to remind you that e-cigarettes are neither *medical* or *pharmaceutical* devices. The fact that many users of e-cigarettes use them as a means to quit smoking is entirely a beneficial side effect.

>we commissioned an independent study of adults, aged 15 and older in addition to >150 smokers. The poll of 1,150 adults

I obviously have concerns that you included 15 - 17 year olds in this survey as both *tobacco* and *e-cigarette* sales are predominantly aimed at the 18+ market. Whilst it is true that many below that age do purchase either tobacco or e-cigarettes, it is not the intended market.

I would also like to request the full survey results as quite often press releases withhold certain pieces of information and can be misinterpreted by the public.

>"This survey clearly shows that right now e-cigarettes are not a quitting aid as >some people are led to believe," says Kathleen O'Meara

My response to this statement cannot be misinterpreted or misconstrued. As a former smoker who *has quit tobacco with e-cigarettes* the survey questions themselves may need to be re-evaluated. I draw your attention to the *Addiction Journal* [1] and the recent press release of a 10,000 participant study [2] that clearly highlight this statement as incorrect.

>A concerning fact highlighted by our research was that 5% of current smokers >used e-cigarettes before they started smoking. It reflects the fear that they are >being used as a 'gateway' product to tobacco.

A statement supported only by your own research. Current research into the "gateway" theory, including the Cochrane Report[3], and the Office of National Statistics[4] [5] both clearly disagree.

>"The vast majority of e-cigarette users are smokers looking to cut down or quit," >says Kathleen O'Meara. "The Irish Cancer Society recommends that smokers quit >immediately and permanently.

Whilst an immediate cessation of tobacco is the ultimate goal, quitting smoking is difficult and whilst options exist to aid the total cessation, other options should be considered. Many Stop Smoking Services in the UK at least are offering advice on quitting tobacco with e-cigarettes. [6][7]

>"If e-cigarettes are to be considered a quitting aid in the future, they need to be >properly regulated by the Department of Health. We are calling for them to be >designated as a medicinal device in the same way nicotine patches and gum are >now.

Whilst improvements to the safety of electronic cigarettes can be made, care must be taken to not over-regulate to the point where devices are *ineffective* with regards to *cessation*. Clive Bates, former head of ASH goes into great depth on what he believes are the best options. [8]

In summary, most of the press release can be misinterpreted and will lead to unnecessary media headlines that take the results further out of context. I urge you to publish the full results, including the questions asked to prevent this.

I look forward to your reply.

Kind Regards,
Paul Barnes
United Kingdom

References

[1] *Addiction Journal* - <http://www.addictionjournal.org/press-releases/e-cigarette-use-for-quitting-smoking-is-associated-with-improved-success-rates>

[2] *BBC NewsBeat* - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/32333424/e-cigs-not-addictive-says-poll-of-10000>

[3] *Cochrane Report* - http://www.cochrane.org/CD010216/TOBACCO_can-electronic-cigarettes-help-people-stop-smoking-or-reduce-the-amount-they-smoke-and-are-they-safe-to-use-for-this-purpose

[4] *Office of National Statistics* http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_386291.pdf

[5] *Smoking Toolkit Study* <http://www.smokinginengland.info/downloadfile/?type=latest-stats&src=11>

[6] *National Centre for Smoking Cessation & Training*: http://www.ncsct.co.uk/usr/pub/e-cigarette_briefing.pdf

[7] *Fresh Smoke Free*

NE: http://www.freshne.com/images/Making_smoking_history/ElectronicCigarettesWEBFINAL.pdf

[8] *Clive Bates: Advice for Policy Makers* <http://www.clivebates.com/?p=2300>