



# Tobacco Harm Reduction: Key Themes

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# Declaration

- Author and Executive Editor – “No Fire, No Smoke: The Global State of Tobacco Harm Reduction report published by Knowledge-Action-Change. KAC promotes public health through harm reduction
- DrugWise is a UK-based drug information NGO
- Member of the UK Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs
- Member of Secretariat of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Prescribed Drug Dependence

# The global smoking problem

Over 1 bn smokers globally, 80% in low and middle income countries (WHO)

Half of all those who smoke will die prematurely from smoking-related diseases

70% of deaths are in low and middle-income countries

Over six million people die from a smoking-related disease every year

More people die from smoking cigarettes than from malaria, HIV and TB combined

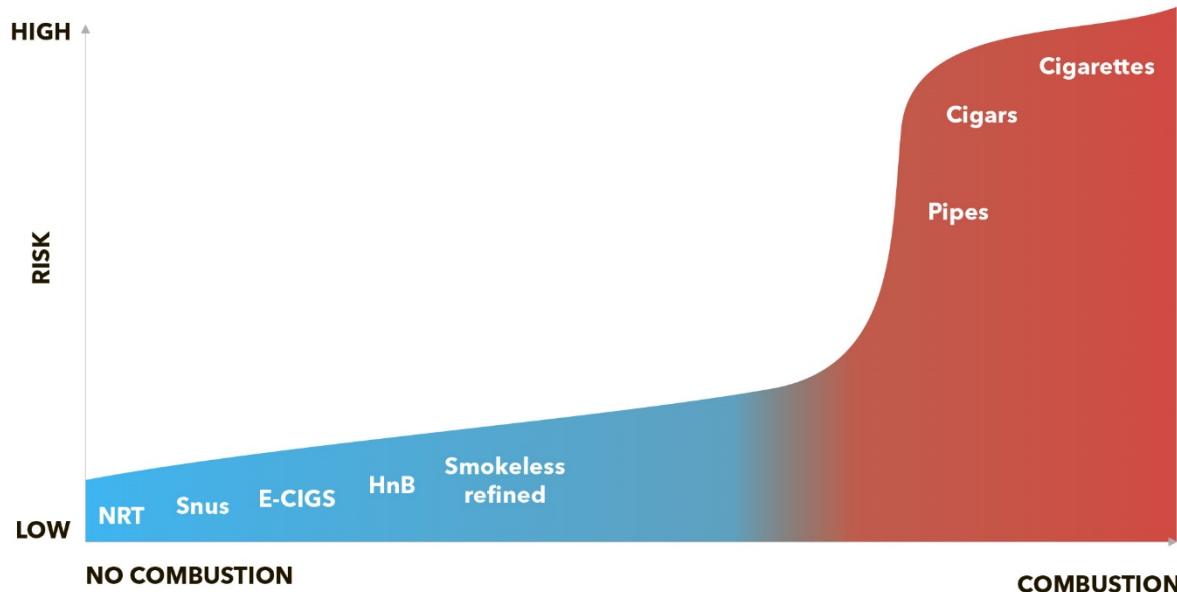
By the end of the century 1 bn people will have suffered a smoking-related disease (WHO)



# The problem - combustion

Mike Russell “Smokers cannot easily stop smoking because they are addicted to nicotine.... People smoke for nicotine but they die from the tar”  
 1976 BMJ 1: 1430-1433

Figure 5.3  
*Continuum of risk for nicotine containing products*



*Figure from: No Fire, No Smoke: The Global State of Tobacco Harm Reduction 2018 (2018). London: Knowledge-Action-Change*

# The tobacco harm reduction proposition

Most smokers say they want to stop smoking

Many have tried to stop

Many are unable or unwilling to give up nicotine – they like it

Smoking tobacco is the most harmful way of delivering nicotine

Providing safer ways to deliver nicotine enables people to continue using it but to avoid the health risks of smoking

# HIV and Needle Exchange





A TIP FROM A  
FORMER  
SMOKER

**HIV alone didn't  
cause the clogged  
artery in my neck.  
Smoking with HIV did.**

Brian, age 45, California

For free help to  
quit smoking, call  
**1-800-QUIT-NOW.**



[CDC.gov/tips](http://CDC.gov/tips)



# Public Health England

Press release

## E-cigarettes around 95% less harmful than tobacco estimates landmark review

Expert independent review concludes that e-cigarettes have potential to help smokers quit.

Published 19 August 2015

From: [Public Health England](#)

2019

‘Our new review reinforces the finding that vaping is a fraction of the risk of smoking, at least 95% less harmful, and of negligible risk to bystanders.’

‘We should be encouraging smokers to switch.’

Public Health England: Vaping in England: an evidence update February 2019

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaping-in-england-an-evidence-update-february-2019/vaping-in-england-evidence-update-summary-february-2019>
- <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2019/02/27/e-cigarette-evidence-update-patterns-and-use-in-adults-and-young-people/>



KNOWLEDGE  
ACTION CHANGE

# E-cig use promoted by cancer and heart foundations, and the NHS

Home > Your stories > There's more evidence than ever that e-cigarettes are safer than smoking



There's more evidence than ever that e-cigarettes are safer than smoking



NO FIRE, NO SMOKE  
GLOBAL STATE OF TOBACCO  
HARM REDUCTION  
gsth.org

Time to Switch poster



If you don't think you'll ever want to stop smoking, think about switching to vaping. Using an e-cigarette is 95% safer than smoking, because you don't breathe in any tar or carbon monoxide.

Switching completely brings health gains. Stop, the Leicester City Stop Smoking Service, can help with this.

Advisors will also tell you about the licensed stop smoking products available.

Call 0116 454 4000

For more information  
Email [stop@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:stop@leicester.gov.uk)  
[www.stopsmokingleic.co.uk](http://www.stopsmokingleic.co.uk)

stop smoking service



Source: Source: <http://www.stopsmokingleic.co.uk/resource/>

#Ecigwizard

Ecigwizard proudly opened its doors to two new sites today, the first of their kind - both situated inside NHS Hospitals.

Ecigwizard | Sandwell General Hospital

Ecigwizard | Birmingham City Hospital

We're excited to be assisting both staff & patients as they begin their #smokefree journey.

#ecigwizard #sandwell #smokefree #birmingham #hospital #nhs

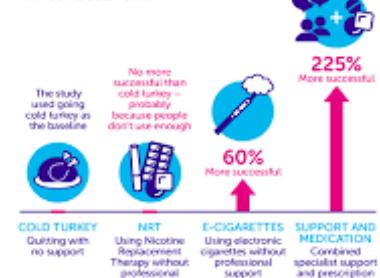


1 like 1 comment 54

10 comments 26 shares

## WHAT'S THE MOST SUCCESSFUL WAY TO STOP SMOKING?

SUCCESS OF POPULAR METHODS COMPARED WITH GOING COLD TURKEY



\*Available free from your local Stop Smoking Service [nhs.uk/smokefree](http://nhs.uk/smokefree)

Source: Vans, D, Brown, J, West, R. 2010. How good is evidence for smoking cessation treatments? A systematic review of randomised controlled trials. *Journal of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics*, 35(1), 1–10.

LET'S BEAT CANCER SOONER  
[cruk.org/smoking](http://cruk.org/smoking)



225%  
More successful

60%  
More successful

SUPPORT AND  
MEDICATION  
Combined  
specialist support  
and prescription  
medication\*



## THE EVIDENCE SO FAR SHOWS THAT E-CIGARETTES ARE FAR SAFER THAN SMOKING

1 E-cigarettes contain nicotine but not cancer causing tobacco

2 Nicotine is addictive but does not cause cancer

3 Tobacco is the biggest cause of preventable death in the UK. Over 100,000 deaths per year

= 10,000

4 Passively breathing vapour from e-cigarettes is unlikely to be harmful

5 Growing evidence shows e-cigarettes are helping people to stop smoking

LET'S BEAT CANCER SOONER  
[cruk.org](http://cruk.org)



CANCER  
RESEARCH  
UK



# National Health Service promotes e-cigarettes

<https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree/help-and-advice/e-cigarettes>

**SMOKEFREE**

HOME QUIT NOW WHY QUIT? EXPERT SUPPORT SUCCESS STORIES

HOME > EXPERT SUPPORT > E-CIGARETTES

## E-cigarettes / vapes

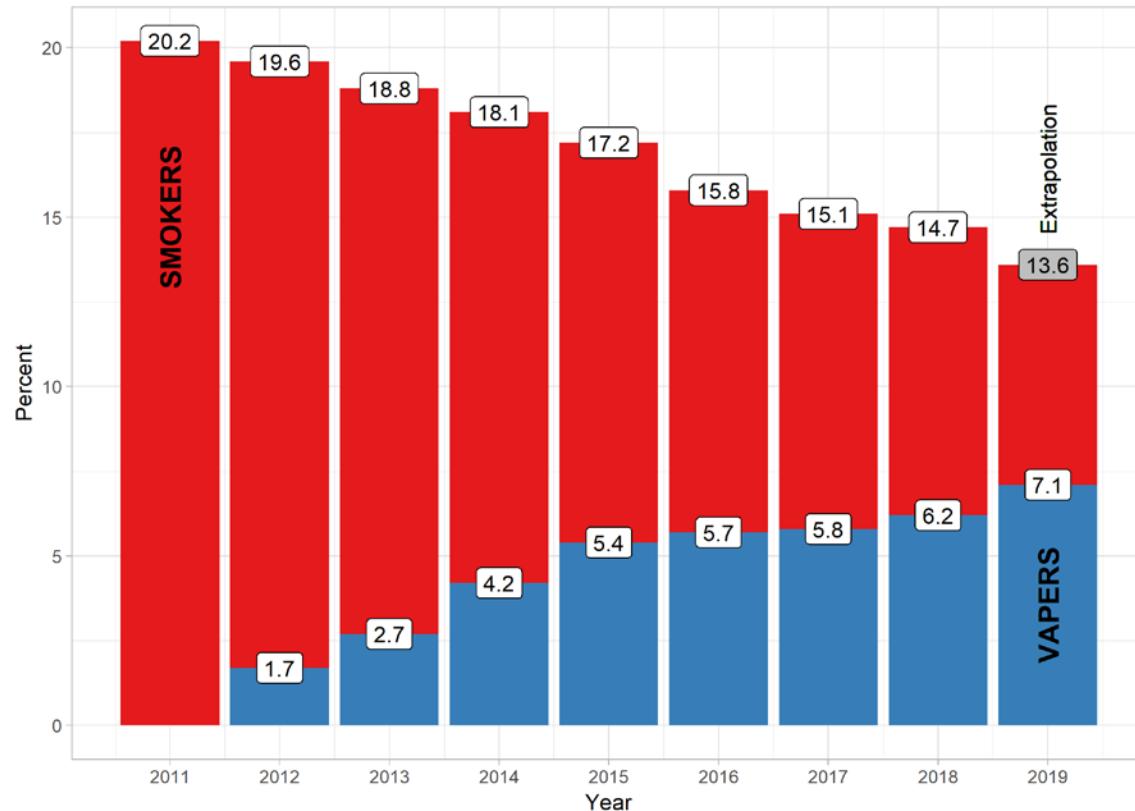
Many people find e-cigarettes – also known as vapes – helpful for stopping smoking. E-cigarettes aren't completely risk free but they carry a small fraction of the risk of cigarettes. Quitting with an e-cigarette is particularly effective when combined with expert face-to-face support.

**Impact of smoking vs vaping**



-  **What are e-cigarettes and how do they work? ›**
-  **What types of e-cigarette are there? ›**
-  **How do I choose the right e-cigarette for me? ›**
-  **Will an e-cigarette help me stop smoking? ›**
-  **How safe are e-cigarettes? ›**

### Trends in smoking (UK) and e-cigarette use (Great Britain) 2012–2019



**VAPERS:** e-cigarette users

**SMOKERS:** cigarette users

#### Data sources:

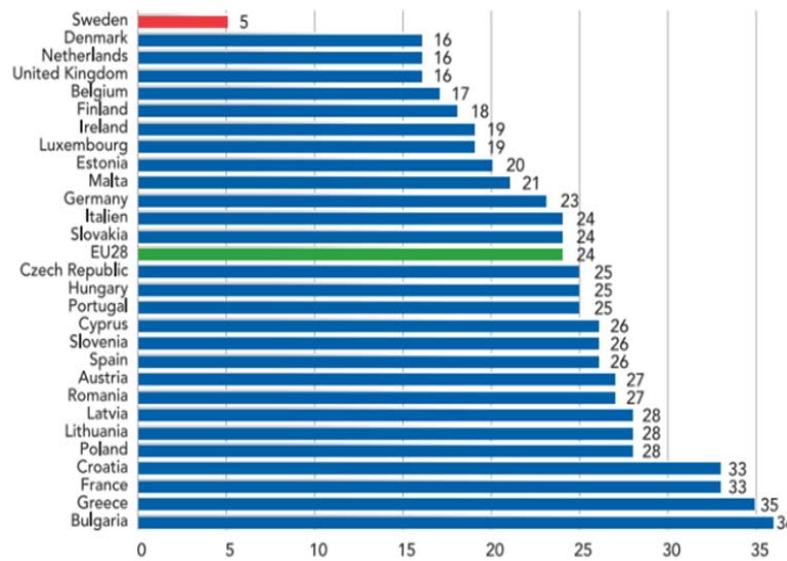
Office for National Statistics. (2019). Adult smoking habits in the UK: 2018. *ONS Statistical Bulletin*, 1–16.

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). (2019). Use of e-cigarettes among young people in Great Britain. *Action on Smoking and Health Website*, (September), 1–14.

# Sweden – due to snus, the lowest level of smoking in Europe and the lowest deaths from tobacco

Figure 4.9

Prevalence of daily smoking in the EU

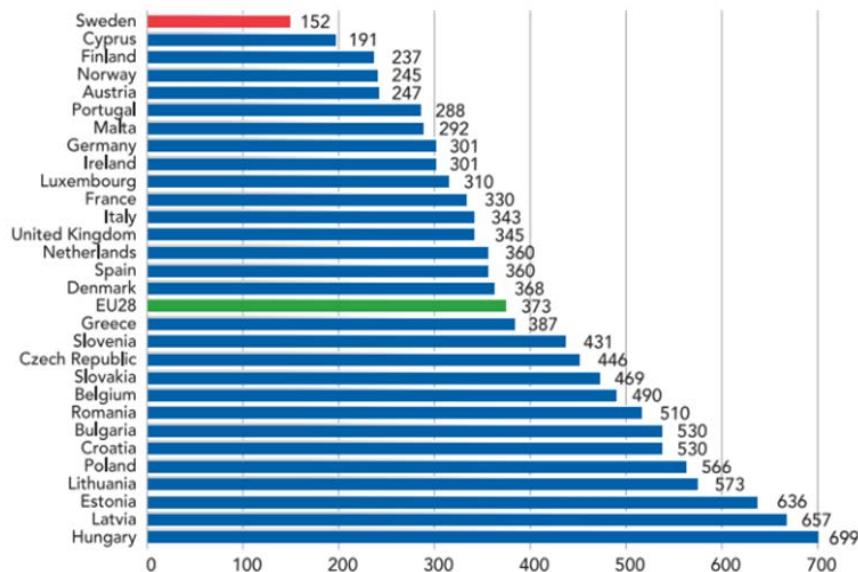


Data source: Eurobarometer 458, May 2017 (TableQB4aT2)

Chart reproduced from: Lars Ramström, poster, Global Forum on Nicotine 2017

Figure 4.10

Death rate per 100,000 attributable to tobacco, all causes of death, men 30 years and older



## The challenge to harm reduction and the right to health

Consumers, politicians and the general public are being left confused about the relative safety of these products by:

- Flawed science usually not conducted in real world situations
- Misleading public information put out by anti-harm reduction activists
- Sensational media reporting
- Lack of leadership from organisations like the WHO

Banning these products, or subjecting them to onerous regulation or high taxation effectively deny access to potentially lifesaving products

# Some key points

- People smoke for the nicotine and die from the tar
- Most smokers wish they wanted to quit
- Tobacco Harm Reduction is *complimentary* to existing tobacco control interventions. But these plus NRT and medications are not enough
- THR can be an offramp from smoking towards reduced risk and cessation.
- Just because we don't know everything doesn't mean we don't know anything
- No evidence of a gateway effect to smoking
- No evidence that current concerns over vaping have anything to do with vaping regular e-liquid
- The anti-nicotine crusade will not work any more than the anti-drug crusade.



KNOWLEDGE  
ACTION CHANGE

# NO FIRE, NO SMOKE GLOBAL STATE OF TOBACCO HARM REDUCTION

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- Find at [www.gsthr.org](http://www.gsthr.org)
- Summary document available in: **Russian, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, Hindi, Polish, Indonesian, Japanese and English.**
- Interactive website features individual country profiles on smoking data and tobacco harm reduction status
- Harry Shapiro - [harry@kachange.org](mailto:harry@kachange.org)