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## E-cigarettes, Vapers Ban Could Harm Public Health

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The Council for Harm Reduced Alternatives (CHRA) and Association of Vapers India (AVI) sought that the government carries out an evidence-based study before banning ENDS and vapers.

E-cigarettes were not only less harmful compared to tobacco cigarettes but also help smokers wean off the nicotine dependence, they said, adding that vaping posed a far lower risk to bystanders than passive smoking.

Regulatory permission for the use of e-cigarettes in developed countries like the US, EU, and the UK yielded positive results, with smoking rates falling in these countries in recent years, CHRA director Samrat Chowdhury said.

Toxic chemicals and tar produced from the burning of cigarettes were the main culprits for tobacco-related deaths across the world, not the nicotine, the AVI said.

E-cigarettes had nicotine but not tar as there was no combustion, and banning e-cigarettes would deny the country's 120 million smokers a lower-risk means of nicotine intake and cessation, it said.

"The government has so far relied on an emotional appeal to persuade tobacco users to kick the habit, but never offered an alternative beyond gums and patches, which have a very low success rate.



"An attempt to [ban](#) e-cigarettes is regressive given that the government's stated policy is to provide wider choices to consumers for all products and services, and not restrict them," Chowdhury said.

AVI [director](#) Pratik Gupta said the idea of banning e-cigarettes was premature given that no studies had been conducted by health bodies on the impact of vaping.

"Meanwhile, multiple peer-reviewed scientific studies in countries such as the UK and elsewhere have convinced health experts and governments to encourage smokers to switch to vaping," he said.

Gupta countered the allegations of vaping leading to teen [use](#) by saying, "Most of the vapers in India, as it is worldwide, are ex-smokers. We strongly oppose [use](#) by underage and non-smokers and would welcome all steps in this direction."

The [government](#) could regulate the sale of e-cigarettes under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Product Act to prevent teens from using them, the [AVI director](#) added.

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