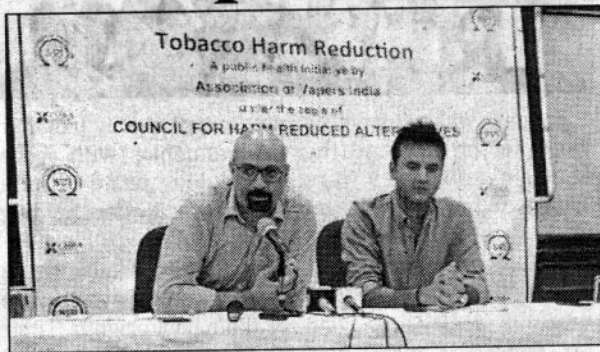


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# The NORTHLINES

## Banning e-cigarettes could harm public health: CHRA



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Council for Harm Reduced Alternatives (CHRA), a national tobacco harm reduction organisation that works towards reducing the tobacco health burden through safer alternatives, and Association of Vapers India (AVI), an advocacy group that represents e-cigarette users across the country, have warned central and states governments against the consequences of banning e-cigarettes, saying it would deprive millions of smokers of safer choices and cause damage to public health. "Harm reduction is a concept we apply in our everyday lives by opting for safer products, be it refined oil

or less-polluting cars. In tobacco use too, the lives of users can be positively impacted with harm-reduced alternatives. 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" Samrat Chowdhery, Director, CHRA.

Pratik Gupta, Director, AVI, said: "The idea of banning e-cigarettes is premature given that no studies have been conducted by our health bodies on the health 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. The hurry to ban e-cigarettes is therefore not understandable." "We request the government and health authorities to seriously consider the role of tobacco harm reduction in combating the tobacco epidemic which is killing a million people in our country every year," Chowdhery said, adding that lower-risk alternatives are also available for smokeless tobacco in the form of Swedish snus, which like e-cigarettes, has been found to reduce harm by over 95%. "This would require a shift from the current moralistic approach of 'quit or die' to a more pragmatic one," he added. The government can 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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