THE ONTARIO TOBACCO RESEARCH UNIT
UNITÉ DE RECHERCHE SUR LE TABAC DE L'ONTARIO
Generating knowledge for public health

PROJECT NEWS

July 2020

Creating Knowledge for E-Cigarette Regulatory Policy

Introduction and Summary of Work Completed

The e-cigarette policy environment in Canada is developing rapidly. With support from Health Canada, and in partnership with Physicians for Smoke Free Canada's project *"Addressing Knowledge Gaps Important to Tobacco Control",* the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) has completed three reports about policy options for regulating vaping in Canada. Each of these reports discuss the evidence for a range of policy options and assess feasibility for implementation in the Canadian context.

Upcoming Webinar Series

OTRU will award a certificate in "E-Cigarette Policy" to participants who complete all three sessions.

- Monday September 14, 12-1pm EST: E-Cigarette Dependence and Association with Cigarette Smoking
- Monday October 5, 12-1pm EST: Regulatory Policy for E-Cigarette Flavours
- Monday November 2, 12-1pm EST: Regulatory Policy for Marketing of E-Cigarettes

The reports include:

- E-Cigarette Dependence and Association with Cigarette Smoking
- Regulatory Policy for E-Cigarette Flavours
- Regulatory Policy for E-Cigarette Marketing

Note: Links above are to the summary reports. Full reports are available on request by emailing publications@otru.org and stating the name of the report.

Upcoming Studies

Work is currently underway to complete four additional projects in the current fiscal. The studies include:

- E-Cigarette Discrete Choice Experiment
- Simulation Modelling of E-Cigarette Policies
- Youth Access to E-Cigarettes
- E-Cigarette Harm Reduction Discourse Analysis

E-Cigarette Discrete Choice Experiment

A discrete choice experiment (DCE) is a survey-based experimental approach with the objective of eliciting individual preferences for goods and services.[1] In DCEs, the participants note a series of preferences across products described using a set of attributes and characteristics. The relative importance of each attribute and the value of alternative options can be derived from the choices, using choice models. As a hypothetical choice strategy, DCEs' particular strengths are in their capacity to examine potential policies that have not yet been implemented. This research strategy has significant precedent in both public health and tobacco research.[2,3,4] In this DCE, respondents will choose their preferred option from a choice of four e-cigarette products described by four attributes: flavour, health impact, nicotine concentration, and price.

Simulation Modelling of E-Cigarette Policies

Developed by Melbourne researchers, the SHINE platform is a scalable and robust platform that integrates with "big data" to provide comparisons of health interventions in a highly standardized way, traversing different risk factors and conditions, as well as different population groups, and doing so over different time scales. SHINE is intended to be adaptable to different countries by using standardized demographic, epidemiological (e.g. GBD data) and cost data. This project will adapt SHINE to the Canadian context to test the impact of e-cigarette policy interventions. This project will identify a test intervention to develop the model for Canada and the inputting of appropriate Global Burden of Disease indicators. Once, developed this model will be expanded for multiple interventions. The primary outputs of the SHINE model when fully implemented will provide Canada with a Health Intervention League Table, a Health Intervention Impact Calculator, providing health decision makers access to effectiveness and cost-effectiveness data on interventions identified by the Vaping Advisory Committee.

Youth Access to E-Cigarettes

This study aims to provide an overview of the problem of youth access to e-cigarettes in Canada, and review the evidence to inform policy options to limit youth access. Methods will include reviewing available surveillance data in Canada to understand the extent to which youth are accessing e-cigarettes, as well as relevant retail compliance data. A jurisdictional scan will be completed to identify promising policies, as well as evidence related to their effectiveness.

Policy options used to restrict youth access to other substances include alcohol, tobacco and cannabis will also be considered.

Special attention will be given to the following policy areas: minimum age of purchase, social sources, online sales, retail licensing, outlet proximity, restricting sales to adult only stores, and compliance with youth regulatory measures. The study will also include a test shop to explore retailer compliance with regulatory measures to restrict youth access.

Harm Reduction Discourse Analysis

This study aims to review the discourse about "harm reduction" with respect to electronic cigarettes. While "harm reduction" has been well-defined in the context of safe injection sites and naloxone, far less attention has been paid to the term in tobacco research. Specifically, this study will aim to understand how the tobacco industry is using "harm reduction" language to influence attitudes, perceptions and beliefs about electronic cigarettes and how tobacco control stakeholders and and policymakers are adopting it. The goal is to explore policy options to oversee the use of harm reduction language by industry particularly as it pertains to attracting youth to electronic cigarettes. Furthermore, traditional harm reduction fields have not had to account nearly as much for industry influence or co-option of "harm reduction" in the way that tobacco public health professionals must. Results will inform research, guidelines and policies to protect consumers from industry manipulation.

The project will include a literature review on harm reduction and e-cigarettes, a jurisdictional review about how different jurisdictions are using harm reduction language. A discourse analysis will explore how harm reduction language is being used by different stakeholder groups including industry, government, and academia. Key informant interviews will be conducted with experts to triangulate findings.

Knowledge Translation

Deliberative Dialogue

The findings from the three completed reports will be discussed with experts and stakeholders at a deliberative dialogue planned in October 2020.

Webinar Series

An upcoming webinar series will present and discuss the findings from the completed reports. This webinar series will explore theory, evidence, and explore options for regulatory policies that may be important considerations in Canada. The goal is to provide an overview of the vaping context in Canada, discuss promising policy options, and discuss the feasibility of implementation in jurisdictions across Canada. Participants will be encouraged to ask questions for the presenters and panelists.

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Presenters will include:

- Dr. Robert Schwartz, Ontario Tobacco Research Unit, University of Toronto
- Daniel Eisenkraft Klein, Ontario Tobacco Research Unit
- Emily Taylor, Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (moderator)

Over the course of the series panelists will include:

- Heidi Rathjen, Coalition Québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac/Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control
- Flory Doucas, Coalition Québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac/Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control
- Jack Boomer, Clean Air Coalition, BC
- Les Hagen, University of Alberta
- Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Nova Scotia

For more information about the webinars and to register, visit our Events page.

Author: Emily Taylor

References

[1] Buckell, J., & Sindelar, J. L. (2019). The impact of flavors, health risks, secondhand smoke and prices on young adults' cigarette and e-cigarette choices: a discrete choice experiment. *Addiction 114*(8), 1427–1435.

[2] Kistler, C. E., Ranney, L. M., Sutfin, E. L., Chrzan, K., Wretman, C. J., Enyioha, C., Meernik, C., Berman, M., Zarkin, G. A., & Goldstein, A. O. (2019). Product attributes important to US adult consumers' use of electronic nicotine delivery systems: a discrete choice experiment. *BMJ Open 9*(8), e027247. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-027247

[3] Koopmanschap, M. A., Stolk, E. A., & Koolman, X. (2010). Dear policy maker: have you made up your mind? A discrete choice experiment among policy makers and other health professionals. *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care 26*(2), 198–204.

[4] Shang, C., Weaver, S. R., White, J. S., Huang, J., Nonnemaker, J., Cheng, K. W., & Chaloupka, F. J. (2020). E-cigarette Product Preferences among Adult Smokers: A Discrete Choice Experiment. *Tobacco Regulatory Science 6*(1), 66–80. https://doi.org/10.18001/trs.6.1.7