Nearly 2 million U.S. adult nonsmokers vape

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A study highlights concerns that e-cigs, marketed as a way to stop smoking, may be addictive

<u>Aimee Cunningham</u> 1:20pm, October 9, 2018



E-CIGARETTES ONLY Of the estimated 1.9 million American adults who vape but have never consistently smoked regular cigarettes, the majority were aged 18 to 24 years.

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Nearly 2 million U.S. adults who have never consistently smoked traditional cigarettes use e-cigarettes, according to results from a national survey. Of these <u>sole e-cig users</u>, about 60 percent are young adults, aged 18 to 24, researchers report online October 9 in *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

E-cigarette companies have marketed the devices — which heat and vaporize liquids that typically contain nicotine — as a way to help adults quit smoking. But some public health officials worry that e-cigarettes could become a means to nicotine addiction, rather than an end.

This concern is especially true for adolescents and young adults, whose <u>developing brains</u> <u>are vulnerable to nicotine exposure</u>, which can cause addiction and other harms (*SN Online: 8/19/15*). E-cigarettes also can pose a variety of other <u>health risks</u> (*SN: 3/5/16, p.*

16).

Researchers analyzed 2016 data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Among 261,541 nonsmokers, defined as having less than 100 cigarettes in a lifetime, 1.4 percent reported vaping. That corresponds to about 1.9 million sole e-cigarette users when extrapolated to the U.S. adult population in 2016. About 1.2 million of those users were young adults.

The work "highlights the potential need to regulate sales and marketing of e-cigarettes to protect vulnerable populations, including young persons who have never smoked combustible cigarettes," the researchers say.

Citations

M. Mirbolouk et al. . *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Published online October 9, 2018. doi: 10.7326/M18-1826.

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