

British Paediatric Respiratory Society



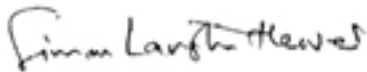
October 15th 2021

Position Statement on active and passive exposure of children and adolescents below 18 years of age to tobacco smoke, vaping and e-cigarettes

The British Paediatric Respiratory Society (BPRS) is firmly opposed to active and passive exposure to tobacco smoke and to vaping and e-cigarette (with or without nicotine) exposure for children below the age of 18 years and calls on the governments of the UK to further legislate against advertising and promotion to this age group. This is aligned with the Forum of International Respiratory Societies and WHO. The BPRS endorses in full the 10 recommendations of the European Academy of Paediatrics (in press, *Frontiers in Pediatrics*, 2021) as follows:

1. The European Academy of Paediatrics proposes that e-cigarettes should be considered to be dangerous until proven otherwise. These products comprise literally thousands of liquids containing tens of thousands of chemicals, for almost all of which neither the short or long term toxicity is known. As with medicinal products for inhalation, the onus is on the manufacturers to prove the safety of these products, not on physicians to prove that they are unsafe.
2. The European Academy of Paediatrics considers that e-cigarettes are a gateway to nicotine addiction. The Academy will not enter into a debate about whether or not they are a gateway to smoking because this is irrelevant; nicotine addiction and its multisystem health consequences in young people must be prevented, irrespective of whether these products lead on to smoking tobacco.
3. The European Academy of Paediatrics believes that the addition of flavourings to e-liquids is a deliberate attempt by the industry to enhance the use of these products, and cannot in any way be said to aid their utility as aids to smoking cessation. The Academy calls for an immediate ban on the addition of flavourings to e-liquids.
4. E-cigarettes, whether or not they contain nicotine, contain chemicals whose acute and chronic toxicity is either unknown, or known to be harmful, including being carcinogenic, pro-inflammatory and immunosuppressive. The European Academy of Paediatrics insists that children and young people must be protected from the effects of these chemicals, and that includes protection from passive exposure to these products.
5. Devices used for inhaling these products can also be used for inhaling other substances of addiction, including cannabinoids, which add to the toxicity of these products. The European Academy of Paediatrics considers that children and young people should not be given access to such devices.
6. There is overwhelming evidence that the acute toxicity of e-cigarettes is far in excess of that of conventional tobacco products. The European Academy of Paediatrics insists that children and young people must be protected from the multiple acute lung diseases caused by e-cigarettes.

7. The potential medium and long term toxicity of e-cigarettes is as yet unknown because of insufficient time to study them; but given that acute toxicity is greater than tobacco, the recommendation of the European Academy of Paediatrics is that until proven otherwise the long term toxicity of these liquids must be considered a greater threat even than that of tobacco.
8. The European Academy of Paediatrics notes the overwhelming scientific evidence that e-liquids not merely have overlapping toxicity in numerous experimental studies with that of tobacco, but also exerts additional harmful effects. The Academy recommends that e-liquids should not be considered a watered down version of tobacco, but to be toxic in novel ways in their own right.
9. Children and young people should be protected by legislation from exposure to e-cigarettes. The European Academy of Paediatrics recognises the huge benefits of such legislation in curbing tobacco smoking and ameliorating its adverse effects, both on smokers and those who passively inhale, including the foetus. The Academy recommends that e-cigarettes are treated in exactly the same way in terms of legislation as conventional tobacco products, by banning their use in public places and enclosed spaces such as cars, banning all advertising, insisting on plain packaging with health warnings, and the introduction of stringent penalties for the sale of these products to underage children and young people.
10. The European Academy of Paediatrics notes with profound alarm that social media is being used to entice young people including under-age children to start and continue e-cigarette use, and to obtain access to these products. The Academy recommends that social media companies be compelled to take responsibility for this, and take steps to prevent this happening in the future.



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President, BPRS on behalf of BPRS Executive Committee