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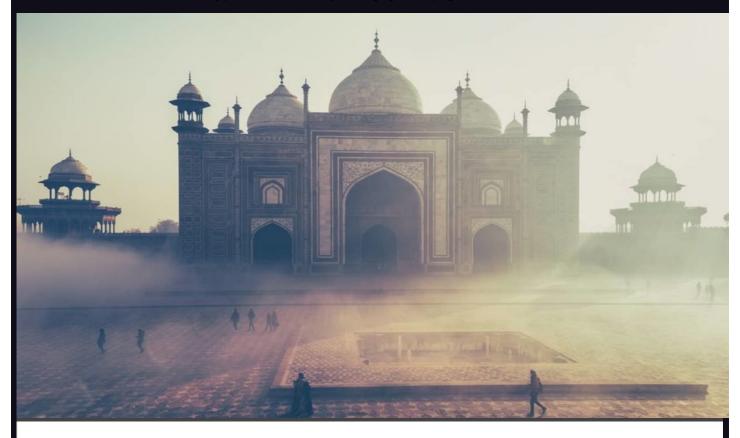
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Politics Asia

India's Health ministry plans to issue advisory warning against vaping

The Union Health Ministry of India is ignoring all the studies in favour of vaping for harm reduction, and planning to issue an

advisory to all states, warning against the products.

By <u>Diane Caruana</u> -

November 22, 2017

The advisory is expected to place e-cigarettes under the same umbrella as products such as flavoured hookah, despite being significantly safer than the latter. The warnings are expected to include statements saying that vaping is extremely harmful to health, and that e-cigarettes have never been approved by the ministry of health and family welfare. "The public will be advised, in their own interest, not to use any such products, sold or marketed in any form and under any name or brand," said a senior ministry official.

Headed in the wrong direction

Public Health experts will agree that this move is a step in the wrong direction. Last year two scientists, R.N. Sharan of the Department of Biochemistry, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), and M. Siddiqi, Chairman of Cancer Foundation of India wrote a letter to the <u>Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda</u>, urging him to consider policies that facilitate smoking cessation by providing smokers with safe and regulated tobacco alternatives.

"The Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (<u>ENDS</u>), more popularly known as e-cigarettes, offer a safer and effective way of meeting the physiological demands of nicotine to smokers to help quit or cut down smoking significantly," they said, after pointing out that in countries such as the <u>UK</u>, these products are successfully being used as smoking cessation tools.



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"The Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS), more popularly known as e-cigarettes, offer a safer and effective way of meeting the physiological demands of nicotine to smokers to help quit or cut down smoking significantly."

- R.N. Sharan of the Department of Biochemistry, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU); M. Siddiqi, Chairman of Cancer Foundation, India

Additionally, <u>a study also carried out last year by US non-profit organization Reason Foundation</u>, found that the result of <u>vaping</u> products becoming more accessible and sold at more competitive prices in India, would naturally lead to more smokers switching to vaping. The researchers calculated that the number of smokers could decrease by 50% or more within the next 20 years, which would equate to saving around 90 million life-years. "In 30 years, vaping might eliminate smoking altogether," concluded the study.

Data showing that e-cigs could reverse India's tobacco problem

India has a very serious tobacco problem and unfortunately the second largest cigarette smoking population in the world. Yet, all this data that could contribute to reversing the problem keeps being ignored. Earlier this year the Union Health Ministry formed a working group to assess the effect of the products on local vapers, in an attempt to find out whether a ban is really necessary. This committee concluded that the products have <u>cancer-causing properties</u>, and are highly addictive, based on which the Union government is planning on <u>implementing a ban</u>.

Dr. Siddiqi and Prof. Sharan spoke up again. Last August they wrote yet another <u>letter</u> addressed to the Union Minister, urging him to avert a <u>public health disaster</u> by regulating electronic cigarettes rather than ban them. "We believe that public health in India is at a greater risk under a prohibitive environment than by allowing smokers, who wish to cease tobacco use, an alternative option based on nicotine replacement via e-cigarettes." said Prof. Sharan.

India's Health Ministry still ignoring scientific evidence

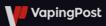
In line with what several studies have been indicating, the scientists pointed out that the devices have been shown to lead to decreased smoking rates in the countries where they have been <u>endorsed</u>. Infact, thanks to the advent of vaping, the UK who has fully endorsed the devices as part of smoking cessation programs, is reporting the <u>lowest number of smokers ever recorded</u>.

"At a time when there is growing support for e-cigarettes in many countries it is regrettable that India appears to be moving in a negative direction. Given the scale of tobacco use in India there is huge potential for <u>tobacco harm reduction</u>." said Prof. Sharan. "At a time when there is growing support for e-cigarettes in many countries it is regrettable that India appears to be moving in a negative direction. Given the scale of tobacco use in India there is huge potential for tobacco harm reduction."

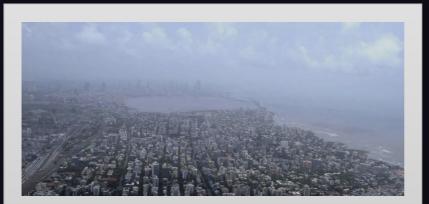
- R.N. Sharan of the Department of Biochemistry, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU

n the meantime the senior health ministry official, said that the health ministry is trying to decide under which ban to place e-cigarettes ne Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, or the Poisons Act 1919. Some states, ncluding Punjab, Chandigarh, Haryana, Kerala, Mizoram, Karnataka, and Jammu and Kashmir have already banned e-cigarettes as n unapproved drug, under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

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25% of Mumbai's youth are addicted to tobacco says new study

The research was conducted by Mazgaon's Prince Aly Khan Hospital in association with Manipal University, and the participants consisted of 1,000 students from 30 municipal and private schools. The researchers said that sadly one of the key factors that motivated this research, was the large presence of young patients seeking cancer treatment in Mumbai. The ... Continue reading





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<u>Diane Caruana</u> <u>https://www.vapingpost.com</u> n-house journalist covering international vaping news

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