

E-cigarette Cessation on Reddit: How users discuss their cessation experience, social support, and recommendations to quit

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Objective

Describe conversations about e-cigarette cessation between Reddit users, including reported methods for cessation, experienced facilitators and barriers, social support, and recommendations

Background

- In 2018, 8.1 million adults reported using e-cigarettes
- In 2020, 3.02 million high school students reported e-cigarette use
- Vaping has been associated with lung injuries
- Nicotine is a highly addictive substance and harms developing brains
- Few resources for those who are trying to quit vaping
- Reddit is a resource to observe candid, authentic conversations between people



Material & Methods

Qualitative document analysis of e-cigarette cessation threads on Reddit

Data Collection

- 2 subreddits: r/QuittingJUUL and r/QuitVaping
- 5 search terms: advice, help, recommendations, support, and tips
- 20 posts randomly collected per search term
- n = 191

Analytic Methods

- Codebook: 8 codes, 18 subcodes (Figure 1)
- Data reduction and thematic analysis

Results

Figure 1. Frequency of Codes. Number of posts per code including two examples from the Social Engagement and Advice codes. The subcode "social support within Reddit" has the highest number of posts per code

Code	Behaviors	Withdrawal	Social Engagement	Relapse	Attitudes	Motivation for cessation	Policies	Advice
Advice	Subcode		Posts per code					
	Social support within Reddit		147					
	Cessation method		114					
	Attitudes related to vaping use or cessation		92					
	Behavioral changes		87					
	Withdrawal symptoms		80					
	Coping with withdrawal symptoms		70					
	Reaction to relapse		52					
	Health concerns		47					
	Other advice		46					
	Mention of activities related to vaping		43					
	Social support outside of Reddit		42					
	Mention of cigarette use		40					
	Product advice		33					
	Social implications		25					
	Tobacco 21		21					
	COVID-19		15					
	Choosing a time to quit		12					
Flavor ban		6						
Social Engagement		OP: "I'll update again later! And thanks for the comments and upvotes! Appreciate the support."		Comment: "You got this! Don't look back. The first 4 days are the hardest and then it gets much easier"				

Figure 2. Typical Format of an Original Post (OP) and Comment. OP begins with a personal story or explanation of their situation then asks for advice. Comment responds with encouragement

QUITTINGJUUL comments

Two months (self.QuittingJUUL)
10 submitted 1 month ago by pleiadeshyades

Personal story/explanation

I've been two months without vaping (I used disposables up until quitting, but I've always had a Juul) and I'm having a hard time not starting again. I initially quit because of the virus getting crazy in my area, but for some reason lately I've been getting cravings. Almost like a "Why did I stop again?" kind of thoughts. I know if I try it again I'll become hooked, and I don't want to start back at the beginning again.

Asking for advice

Any advice? Just want to talk to someone about it

5 comments share save hide give award report crosspost

Response of encouragement

[-] TKblunts 7 points 1 month ago

You stopped because you were concerned for your health, which is admirable. These vape's haven't been around long enough for us to know what they're actually doing to our bodies. Keep with it! You've made it a long way and it's definitely what's best for your health in the long run.

Discussion

- Subreddits are used as social support
 - Communities and safe spaces for those attempting cessation to connect with others doing the same
 - Sometimes, vaping addiction is a secret from friends and family
 - Stigma of a vaping addiction
- Subreddits are a place for exchanging advice

Type	Example
Product advice	Nicotine pouches or gum
Choosing a time to quit	Quitting on a certain day of the week
Behavioral changes	Replacing with exercising, tapering nicotine concentration
Coping with withdrawal	Chewing gum, using CBD products

Conclusions

- Social support within or outside of Reddit affects the cessation experience
- Reddit is a resource for evidence-based cessation programs
- Advice being shared may be applied to program designs

Future Directions

- Write manuscript and disseminate findings
- Future research may investigate which of these suggested strategies result in sustained cessation

References

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