Quitting Time

Folks are fired up over the alleged health benefits of electronic cigarettes.

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As the new year began, New York State banned sales of electronic cigarettes to anyone younger than 18. The slim, metallic tubes resemble traditional cigarettes and are marketed by manufacturers as a safer substitute for those made of tobacco. But there have been conflicting findings regarding these e-cigarettes' potential health hazards.

Electronic cigarettes are battery-powered devices used by smokers to inhale vaporized liquid nicotine instead of tobacco smoke. When a smoker takes a drag on an e-cigarette, the tip glows and the user inhales the nicotine vapor. But some researchers say the smoke contains unknown quantities of addictive nicotine and other unsubstantiated ingredients that might be toxic to the body. Others say e-cigs only contain water vapor and ingredients that are much less harmful than the more than 7,000 chemicals found in tobacco smoke. Additional findings report that e-cigs cause an instant increase in short-term airway resistance, while others insist the faux cigarettes don't harm the heart and do help smokers quit.

For now, the Food and Drug Administration regulates e-cigarettes as tobacco products since the devices vaporize liquid nicotine. The FDA requires that e-cigarette makers not market the devices for therapeutic purposes. Such advertising would subject e-cigs to stringent government requirements that they prove those benefits. What a drag for the manufacturers.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/electronic-cigarette-risks-23554-5363