

Fewer Latino, Black, Lower Income Adult Smokers Switch to Vaping

Despite being less harmful cigarettes, certain populations are less likely to trade cigarettes for vaping.

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Although studies have demonstrated that [e-cigarettes are a less harmful](#) alternative to traditional cigarettes, certain populations are less likely to make the switch from using [tobacco](#) to [vaping](#).

A study published in the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#) found that Latino, Black and low-income [cigarette smokers](#) are more likely to believe e-cigarettes are at least as harmful as cigarettes and less likely to use e-cigarettes as a tool to quit smoking.

The study, led by researchers from the Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) and the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California, emphasizes the “unintended consequences of regulations and education campaigns focused solely on communicating the risks of e-cigarettes, without also conveying information about their harm relative to cigarettes,” said study lead author Alyssa Harlow, PhD, an epidemiologist and postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Population and Public Health Sciences at Keck, in [a BUSPH article](#).

Given that Latino, Black and low socioeconomic populations are more likely to develop smoking-related conditions, such as cardiovascular complications and cancer, misconceptions about the risks of vaping compared with traditional cigarettes may worsen these disparities, according to the BUSPH article.

Researchers examined several years of data from the US Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study and analyzed differences in [e-cigarette](#) transitions and beliefs about vaping harm by race/ethnicity, income and education.

When compared with Latino, Black and low-income adults, white adults, those with more education (bachelor’s degree or higher) and greater annual income (\$50,000 or more) were more likely to quit [smoking](#) and partake in only e-cigarette use after one year.

The study found that 69% of people who smoked cigarettes believed e-cigarettes were equally or more harmful than cigarettes. Latino and Black adults were more likely to believe this inaccurate claim, helping to explain why they are less likely to switch from cigarettes to vaping only.

The findings “highlight the importance of designing public messaging and educational campaigns in a way that effectively communicates both the risks and benefits of using e-cigarettes,” study senior author and assistant professor of global health Andrew Stokes, PhD, told BUSPH.

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