



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE ON PEDIATRICS 2024

ABSTRACT BOOK



**Vilnius
University**

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY PRESS
2024

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN E-CIGARETTE USE AMONG YOUTH: A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY ANALYSIS

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Introduction. Electronic cigarettes, considered as safer than combustible cigarettes, simulate smoking by heating nicotine or tobacco into vapours. Their growing popularity among teens and young adults raises health concerns, with studies linking them to cardiovascular, respiratory, immune issues, lung injuries, and a potential gateway to combustible smoking and substance addiction.

Objective. The aim of this study is to explore the underlying motivations among young individuals to use e-cigarettes and to uncover gender differences in usage patterns.

Methods. The quantitative study sample included individuals up to 25 years old, without differentiation based on gender or specific location. A comprehensive online survey was conducted in November and December of 2022 using a questionnaire designed by the author. Following the preparation of the online survey, it was shared on youth-oriented social platforms. The statistical analysis was performed using “Microsoft Excel” and “R Studio” software. To analyse the data, the Chi-square test was conducted.

Results. The survey, which included 1,335 respondents up to 25 years old, revealed significant gender difference in initiation patterns, with a higher percentage of females (84.2%) than males (80.1%) trying electronic cigarettes, often starting in adolescence. Recent use was reported by 80.3% of respondents, indicating widespread consumption. The survey also found a preference for higher nicotine concentrations and different acquisition patterns between genders, with males preferring specialized shops and online sources, and females more often obtaining electronic cigarettes through social connections. The main reasons for starting included social influence, stress relief, and flavour variety. Reported symptoms post-use varied by gender, indicating distinct physiological impacts.

Conclusions. The findings highlight a gender variance in electronic cigarette usage among the youth, with a higher inclination observed in females. The trend underscores the need for gender-targeted prevention strategies, especially for females, to limit early exposure. The significant recent electronic cigarette use among youths, coupled with a preference for high nicotine content, signalling a concerning trend towards addiction and emphasizing the need for heightened awareness of nicotine risks. Moreover, gender-specific adverse reactions following electronic cigarette necessitate personalized health education and interventions to address these distinct physiological reactions effectively.

Keywords: electronic cigarettes; e-cigarettes; smoking; carcinogens; nicotine; adolescent; youth; young adults.