Electronic cigarette uptake, perceptions and experiences among Stop Smoking Service users

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What do we know?
• An estimated 2.9m adults in GB use e-cigs.
• 16% of adults current smokers.
• E-cigs available from SSSs if medically licensed.

What did we do?
• Survey (N = 319) on use and perceptions
• Semi-structured interviews (N = 20)
Survey findings

• Participants aged 18-60 years from one Stop Smoking Service in the UK

• Most current smokers (53%) and current/former e-cig users (52%)

• Participants who were uncertain whether e-cigs were safer than regular cigs were less likely to have tried them ($p < 0.001$)

• Participants who perceived e-cigs as safer than regular cigs were more likely to smoke fewer cigarettes per day ($p = 0.008$)
Qualitative findings: barriers to use

• **Extension of smoking**
  “I turned around and I said, ‘What are you still smoking (an e-cig) for?’ and he said ‘because I enjoy a ciggy, I enjoy something in me hands’; I thought it was a waste of time.” (Never user, 56)

• **Safety and uncertainty**
  “They’ve done studies on it and stuff but no one really knows if there is any health risks… there could be a toxin in it that we don’t realise and that could be damaging your health in time.” (Never user, 38)
Qualitative findings: barriers and facilitators to use

• **Cost**
  “They’re quite expensive aren’t they? I think they should drop it a little bit and give everybody a chance.” (Never user, 48)

• **Facilitators:**
  - Regulation
  - Endorsement from others
  - Self-efficacy in using e-cigs
  - Perceived efficacy
Conclusions

What does this work add?
• Relationship between perceived e-cig risk and behaviours
• Identification of barriers and facilitators to use (e.g. stigma associated with smoking may inhibit e-cig uptake)

What are the implications for research and practice?
• Help to inform future SSS behavioural support provision
• Accurate and up-to-date education will enable service users to make informed decisions