E-cigarettes may raise cardiovascular health risk

Chemicals like Nicotine and formaldehyde in e-cigarettes could not only damage the heart but also cause cancer.

New Delhi, Feb 15, 2017: E-cigarettes are being popularized on the basis of their relative low risks as compared to traditional cigarettes because they lack dangerous smoke, tar, and carbon monoxide. However, increasing evidence is showing that they are associated with possible heart and lung health risks. The WHO has already advocated for stricter e-cigarette regulations.

Researchers from a latest study have found that habitual e-cigarette users are more likely than non-users to have increased cardiac sympathetic activity (increased adrenaline levels in the heart) and increased oxidative stress - known mechanisms by which tobacco cigarettes increase cardiovascular risk.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement said that, “The likelihood of developing nicotine addiction is high for electronic cigarettes as well. In a confined space, second hand nicotine vapour is also harmful. The artificial flavors and chemicals in these products are not yet regulated in any manner. Glycol and acetone are also dangerous ingredients of these products and a potent carcinogen. While e-cigarettes do not contain smoke, they do expose others to second-hand emissions. Studies have found carcinogens like formaldehyde, benzene and tobacco-specific nitrosamines coming from those second-hand emissions.”

“The studies also suggest that the lifetime cancer risk of using e-cigarettes long term is estimated to be 5 to 15 times higher than that of smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. Some smokeless tobacco contains greater amounts of nicotine—three to four times more—than cigarettes. Nicotine is a very potent toxin for the cardiovascular system and turning to E-cigarettes for a nicotine fix is not going to erase these risks. Sharing an electronic smoking device such as cigarette or vapes with other people can increase the risk of contracting or transmitting diseases, such as tuberculosis, and viruses, such as herpes and hepatitis, particularly if the mouthpieces are not cleaned properly”, added Dr Aggarwal.
These potential harms are particularly worrisome in light of rising E-cigarette use in teenagers. Nicotine can potentially impair brain development, leading to attention deficit disorder and poor impulse control. The bottom-line is, E-cigarettes are a tobacco product. There is a continuously growing line of data and evidence when it comes to potential risks of E-cigarettes and thus caution must be exercised. For individuals who are smokers, the best recommendation is to try cessation techniques that have been approved and regulated such as gum, patches, etc.

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About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2,60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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