

Dear Sir/Madam,

I support the Government's proposal of total ban on e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes are growing in popularity among the youth. According to a research on the prevalence of e-cigarette among youngsters in Hong Kong, the rate of youngsters (aged 15-29) using e-cigarettes was higher (4.4%) than people aged 30 or above (1.0%). This represents an alarming signal.

Notwithstanding the claim by e-cigarette manufacturers that e-cigarettes are non-addictive, an aid for smoking cessation, accredited and environmentally friendly, scientific researches proved otherwise. E-cigarettes contain toxic chemical substances like propylene glycol, glycerin and carcinogens such as formaldehyde and acetaldehyde which are harmful to humans. In addition, a survey conducted by the School of Public Health of The University of Hong Kong found that e-cigarette users were more likely to have respiratory problems. Teenager's health will, in all likelihood, be affected.

Dangerous though e-cigarettes are, clever marketing obscures this danger. Resembling the marketing strategies of traditional cigarettes in the past, e-cigarettes are promoted through multiple channels. For instance, social media are utilized extensively to promote them to the youth. The message we got from the promotional video on youtube is that smoking is stylish and trendy. Actually, we cannot differentiate whether the actor is smoking traditional cigarettes or e-cigarettes.

Moreover, flavors, designs and packaging are diverse. Distinctive flavors are the main selling point, which encompasses fruit, soft drink, and tobacco. So why can adolescents purchase these lethal products so easily? Because e-cigarettes are readily accessible in Hong Kong at places such as convenience stores, trendy boutiques in Kwai Fong, Mongkok and Causeway Bay, even on social media. The government has made no statute to forbid selling e-cigarettes to teenagers. It still turns a blind eye to this problem. To rectify this situation, something concrete has to be done promptly lest the problem worsen.

The World Health Organization has urged countries to regulate e-cigarettes, as well as their advertising, promotion and sponsorship to minimize the risk of exposing youngsters and non-smokers to e-cigarettes. The Government should keep abreast of the world situation and implement laws to totally ban e-cigarettes with a view to prevent adolescents from having access to them and prohibit the advertisements from promoting smoking behaviour. Considering all the aforementioned, it is hoped that e-cigarettes can be completely banned from sales in Hong Kong.

Yours sincerely,  
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Form5 student