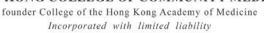


香港社會醫學學院

HONG KONG COLLEGE OF COMMUNITY MEDICINE





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COUNCIL 2018-19

Legislative Council

Attention: the Chairman and Clerk to Panel on Health Services

President

Email: panel hs@legco.gov.hk

Dr Thomas Tsang 曾浩輝 June 15, 2018

Vice-President

Dr Mandy Ho 何孟儀

Legislative Proposal to Regulate Electronic Cigarettes and heat-not-burn (HNB) tobacco products

Chief Censor

Dr William Ho 何兆煒 Dear Sir,

Honorary Secretary

Dr Jackie Leung 梁靜勤 The Hong Kong College of Community Medicine (HKCCM) writes to express our views regarding Government's legislative proposal to regulate e-cigarettes and heat-not-burn (HNB) tobacco products.

Honorary Treasurer

Dr Y H Tam 譚一鴻

Members

Prof Fung Hong 馮康

> Dr Libby Lee 李夏茵

> > Dr S P Mak 麥倩屏

Dr Sammy Ng 吳秉琛

Dr Y K Wan 温遠光

Prof Samuel Wong 黃仰山

E-cigarettes are definitely not harmless. Local and overseas studies have shown beyond doubt that the chemical mixture in e-cigarettes contains a host of carcinogens and toxic substances. Their long-term use will likely increase the risk of cancer, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Importantly, the perceived reduced exposure to toxic substances contained in e-cigarettes may not translate to reduced health risks compared to traditional cigarettes.

HNB products comprise tobacco leaves themselves and they contain chemicals present in traditional cigarettes to a varying degree. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there is no evidence to demonstrate that HNB tobacco products are less harmful than conventional tobacco products.

The claim that e-cigarettes and HNB products aid smokers to quit is misleading. The scientific evidence is scant and the WHO advocates against the use of such products as smoking cessation tools. The fact remains that there are other safe and well-established methods to help smokers quit, like nicotine replacement therapy.

A particularly worrying trend is the targeting of young people in promoting e-cigarettes and HNB products. A local survey found an alarming rate of 9% of secondary school students reported ever-using e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes users are more likely in turn to take up the smoking habit later in life.



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In accordance with WHO recommendations, a growing number of countries have introduced laws to regulate and prohibit e-cigarettes and HNB products. Hong Kong is in real danger lagging behind internationally in this development; for example, Singapore and Macao have imposed a complete ban on e-cigarettes.

The HKCCM considers that a total ban on e-cigarettes and HNB products is the most desirable strategy to protect public health. As the HKSARG

presents its legislative proposal to regulate e-cigarettes and HNB products, we expect a clear explanation on its rationale (as opposed to the original

legislative proposal in 2015) and an evaluation mechanism to monitor

performance. The bottom line is, the status quo is not acceptable. Further inaction against the escalating threat of e-cigarettes and HNB products may

in a few years' time result in a reversal of the downward trend in smoking,

Dr Thomas Tsang 曾浩輝

President

Vice-President

Dr Mandy Ho 何孟儀

Chief Censor

Dr William Ho 何兆煒

Honorary Secretary

Dr Jackie Leung 梁靜勤

Honorary Treasurer

Dr Y H Tam 譚一鴻 Yours sincerely,

Members

Prof Fung Hong 馮康

> Dr Libby Lee 李夏茵

> > Dr S P Mak 麥倩屏

Dr Sammy Ng 吳秉琛

Dr Y K Wan 溫遠光

Prof Samuel Wong 黃仰山 Dr TSANG ho-fai Thomas

President, Hong Kong College of Community Medicine

ultimately sacrificing the health of our citizens.