

Letter to the Editor**PAUCITY OF LITERATURES ON E-CIGARETTE USE (VAPING) IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: A WAKE-UP CALL****Kehinde Kazeem Kanmodi^{1,2,3*}, Precious Ayomide Kanmodi^{1,2,4}**¹Tobacco Research and Advocacy Group, Cephas Health Research Initiative Inc, Ibadan, Nigeria.²Mental and Oral Health Development Organization, Birnin Kebbi, Nigeria.³Department of Community Health, Aminu Musa Habib College of Health Science and Technology, Yauri, Nigeria.⁴Department of Statistics, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria.***Correspondence:** Dr. Kehinde Kazeem Kanmodi; +234 703 232 9156; kanmodikehinde@yahoo.com**Keywords:** E-cigarette, Vaping, Tobacco, Research, Multidisciplinary, Sub-Saharan Africa**Cite this article:** Kanmodi KK, Kanmodi PA. Paucity of literatures on e-cigarette use (vaping) in Sub-Saharan Africa: a wake-up call. Yen Med J. 2020;2(3):1–2.**Dear Editor,**

Tobacco is an addictive psychoactive substance which is rich in nicotine.¹ The nicotine in the smokes of tobacco and tobacco products is an amine which when inhaled, enters into the bloodstream through the pulmonary circulation.¹ Nicotine easily crosses the blood-brain barrier to act on the brain.¹ Nicotine selectively binds with the nicotinic cholinergic receptors (nAChRs) in the brain tissues.¹ By binding with these nAChRs, nicotine stimulates the release of some neurotransmitters, such as catecholamines.¹ The release of these neurotransmitters is responsible for the sympathomimetic effects and some behavioural changes in the human body.¹

There are about 1.1 billion tobacco smokers worldwide.² In fact, more than 80% of tobacco smokers are living in low-income and middle-income countries; sub-Saharan African countries inclusive.³ Tobacco and its products exist in different forms and they are grouped into two classes: smoked tobacco; and smokeless tobacco.^{4,5} The smokeless tobacco includes snus, khaini, snuff, and gutkha while the smoked tobacco includes cigarette, bidis, kreteks, shisha (waterpipe), pipe, or cigar.^{4,5}

Due to the high fatality rates associated with smoked tobacco globally, “less harmful” alternative sources of nicotine were produced and marketed globally in order to reduce the consumption rate of tobacco.^{1,6} A major

example of these alternative sources of nicotine is the e-cigarette.⁶ The first e-cigarette was produced and patented in the year 1965.⁷ Since then, over 400 different brand names of e-cigarettes have been in the physical and online market,⁷ with over 40 million units sold worldwide.⁸

In sub-Saharan African countries, e-cigarettes are marketed via online shops, social media, and shopping malls; this implies that many e-cigarettes are in circulation in the region. The use of e-cigarettes in sub-Saharan Africa is an emerging trend of public health importance.

From extensive literature search of online databases such as PubMed, SCOPUS, CINAHL, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar, we found that there exists paucity of scientific literatures on e-cigarette use (vaping) in sub-Saharan Africa. This shows that very little research had been done on this emerging public health issue.

Based on the above, we recommend that scientific researchers from all relevant academic disciplines such as public health, clinical sciences, basic medical sciences, and social sciences should explore research opportunities on issues pertaining to e-cigarette use among sub-Saharan Africans. Lastly, we recommend that multidisciplinary collaborations should be encouraged among researchers so that very robust studies can be conducted on e-cigarette use in this geographical area – sub-Saharan Africa.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors have none to declare.

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