

Main Research Findings of HKU Youth Quitline



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HKU Youth Quitline Program



Background

- Established in **August, 2005**;
- **First smoking cessation hotline** for youth smokers under the age of 26;
- Funded by the **Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office (TACO)** (from Jun 2011 to Nov 2020);
- Funded by the **Sir Robert Kotewall endowed Professorship Fund** since Dec 2020.

Goals

- To provide **peer-counseling** service to those in need;
- To enhance **smoking cessation** and **smoking reduction rates**, and to **prevent relapse**.

Service Outcome



2,909

counselled youth smokers.

14,508

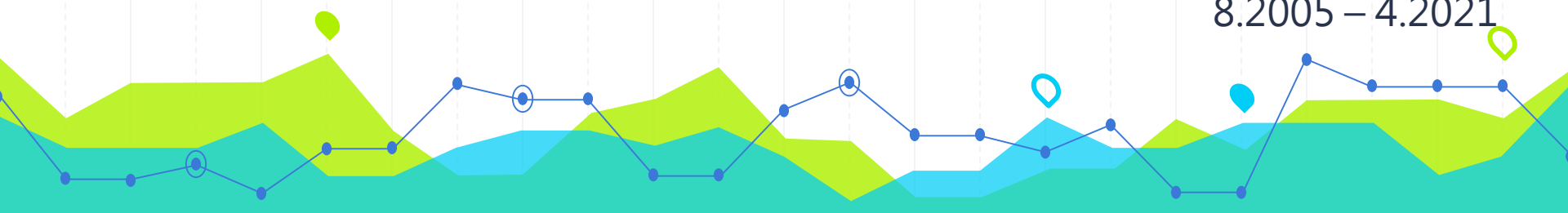
accumulated incoming calls.

54,633

website browsing frequency.

<http://nursing.hku.hk/yquit/>

8.2005 – 4.2021



Service Outcome

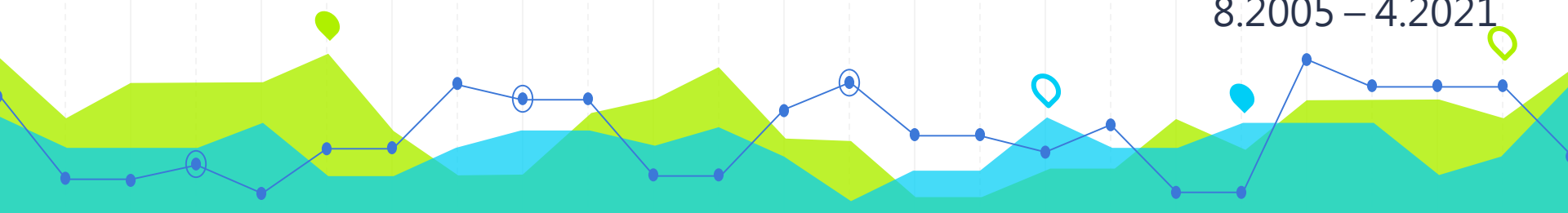


Over 10
Counsellor Training Workshops.

Over 500
peer-counsellors.

Over 250
times of outreach activities.

8.2005 – 4.2021



Youth Quit Line Service Summary

	At 6 th month follow-up stage :
Quit smoking	29.5% (654/2217)
≥50% smoking reduction	19.2% (426/2217)
Attempted quit for ≥7days	51.3% (1137/2217)

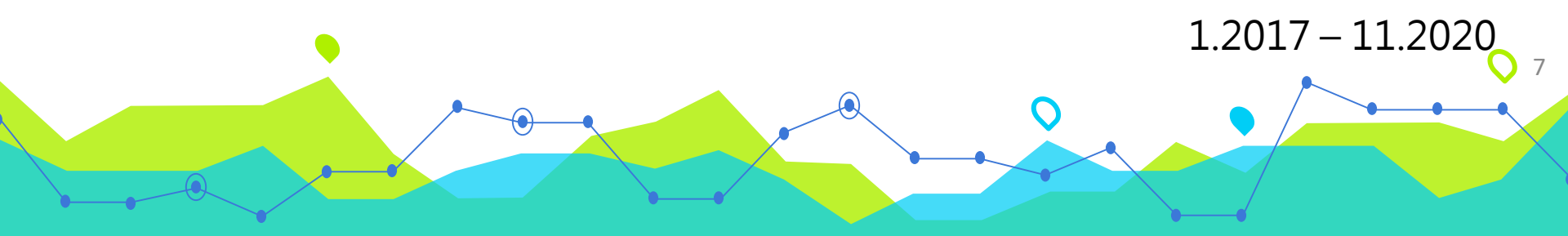
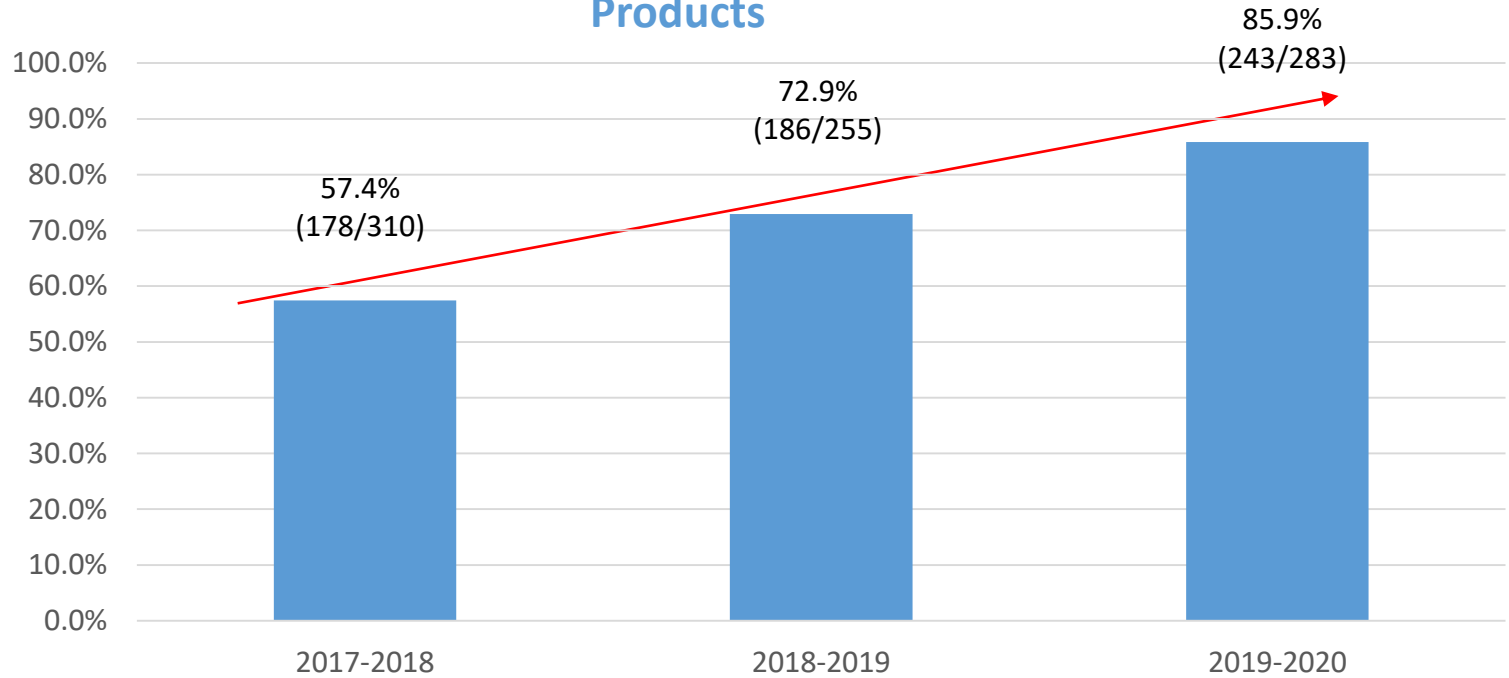
8.2005 – 4.2021

Main Research Findings



Trends in usage of New Tobacco Products (NTPs)

Youth Smokers who have used E-Cigarettes or Heated-Tobacco-Products



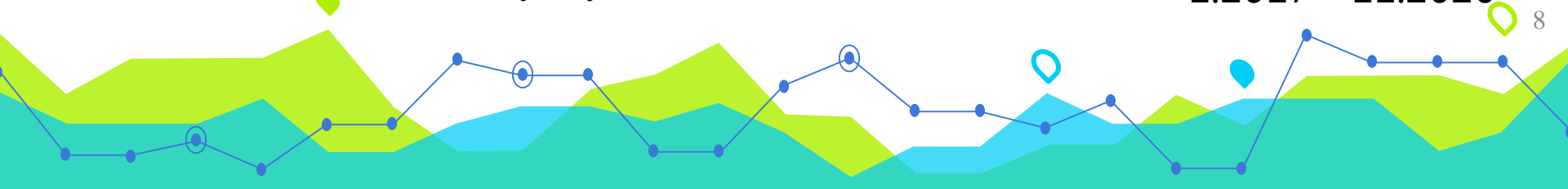
Reasons for using NTPs

Reasons	N (%) *
Curiosity	249 (51.3)
Peer Influence	181 (37.3)
Wants to quit/reduce smoking	105 (21.6)
Likes the flavors	32 (6.6)
Saving money	23 (4.7)
Feels healthier	19 (3.9)
Convenient when in non-smoking areas	18 (3.7)
Odorless and less second-hand smoking	17 (3.5)

*Data collected until 30th Nov 2020, from participants in phase 4 to phase 6. Missing data not included in percentage, participants could choose more than one option

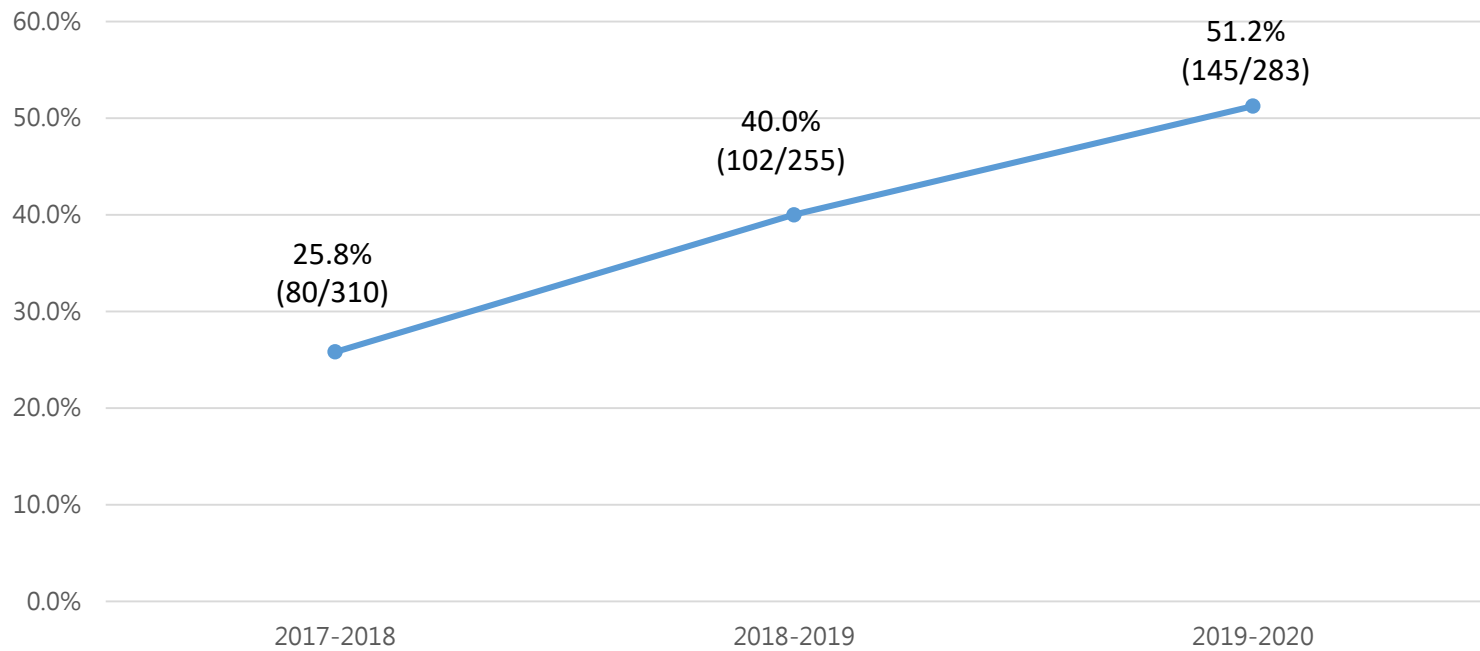
*Total number of surveyed youth smokers = 485

1.2017 – 11.2020

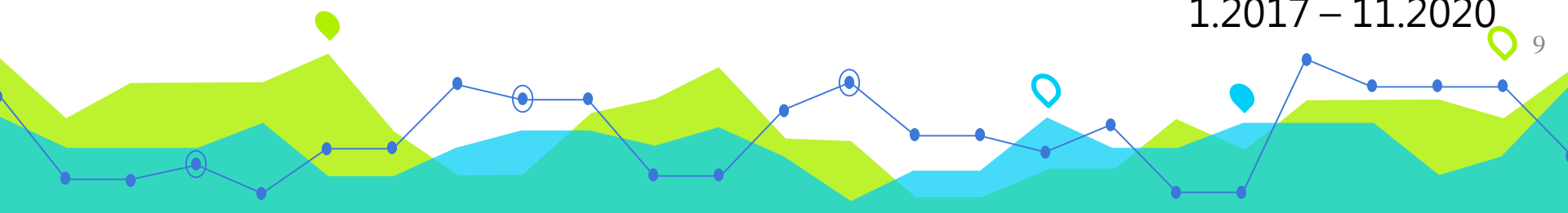


Youth Smokers' NTPs User Habits

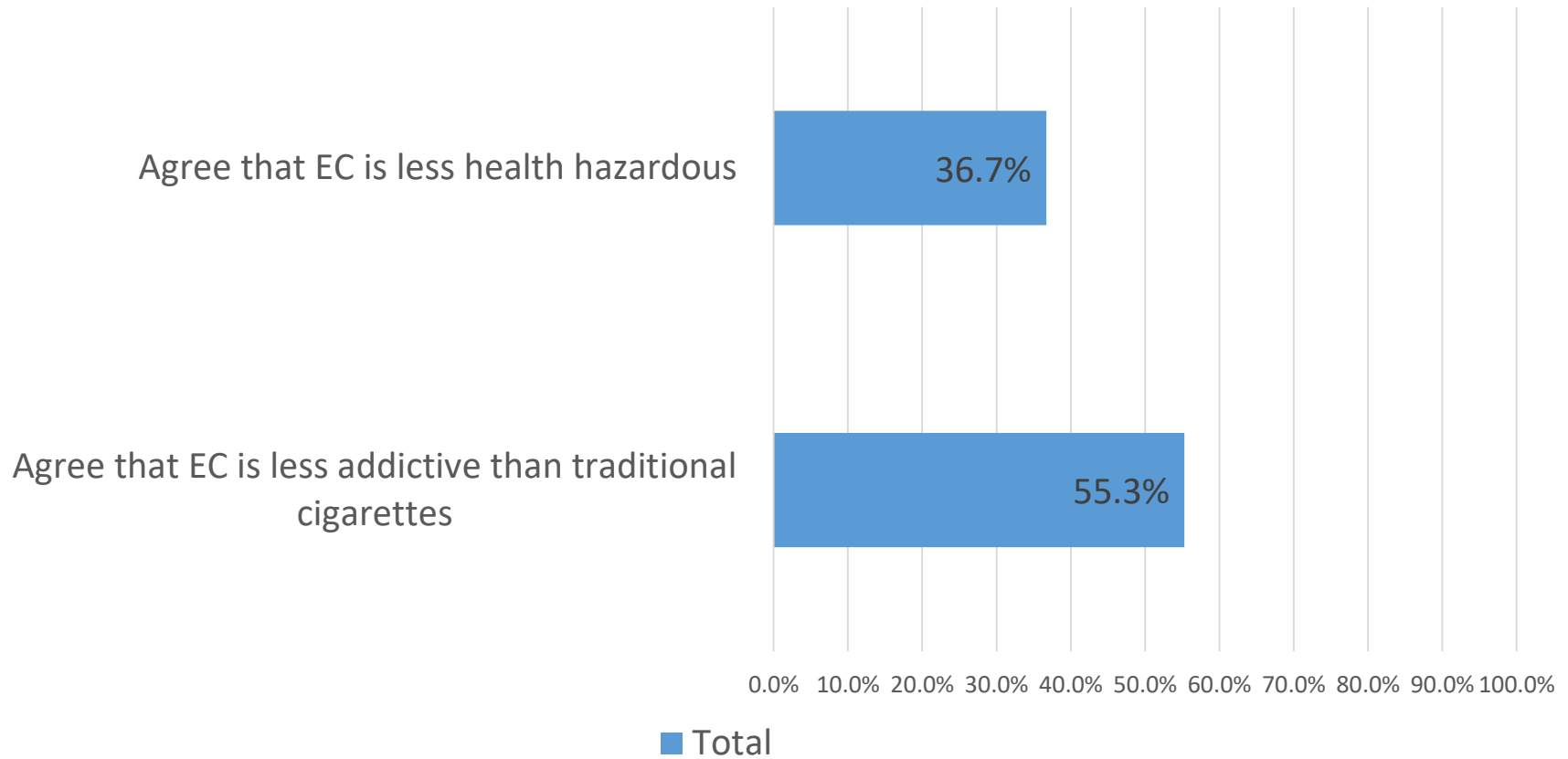
Youth Smokers who used both HTPs and traditional cigarettes



1.2017 – 11.2020



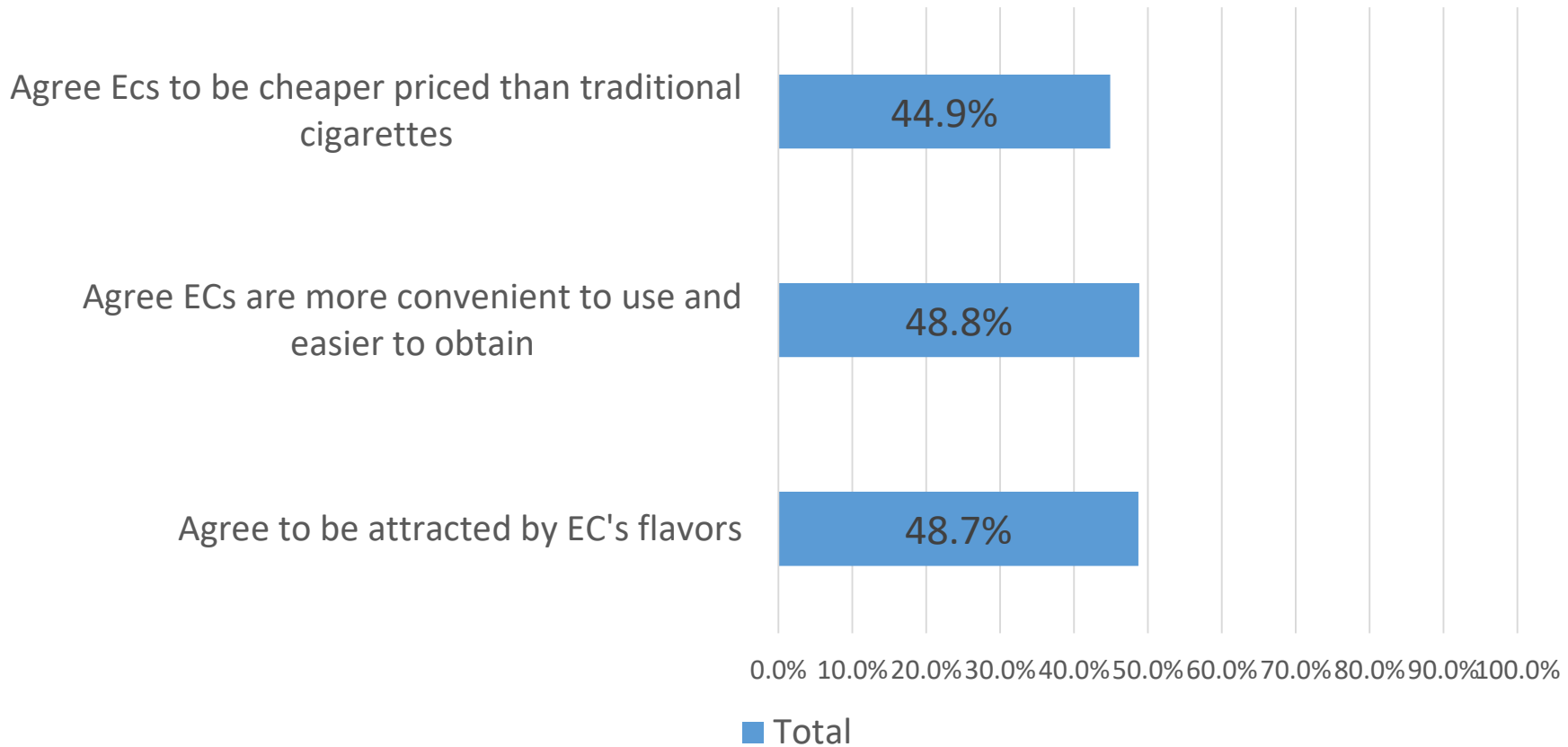
Youth Smokers' Knowledge on E-Cigarette (EC)



*Total number of surveyed youth smokers = 733

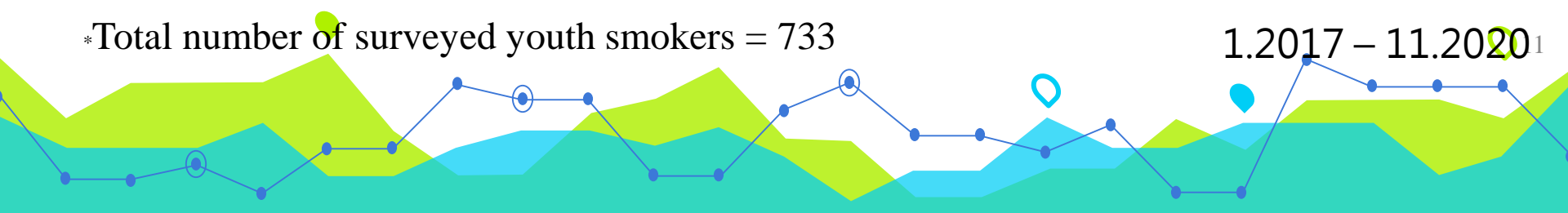
1.2017 – 11.2020

Youth Smokers' Attitudes on E-cigarette



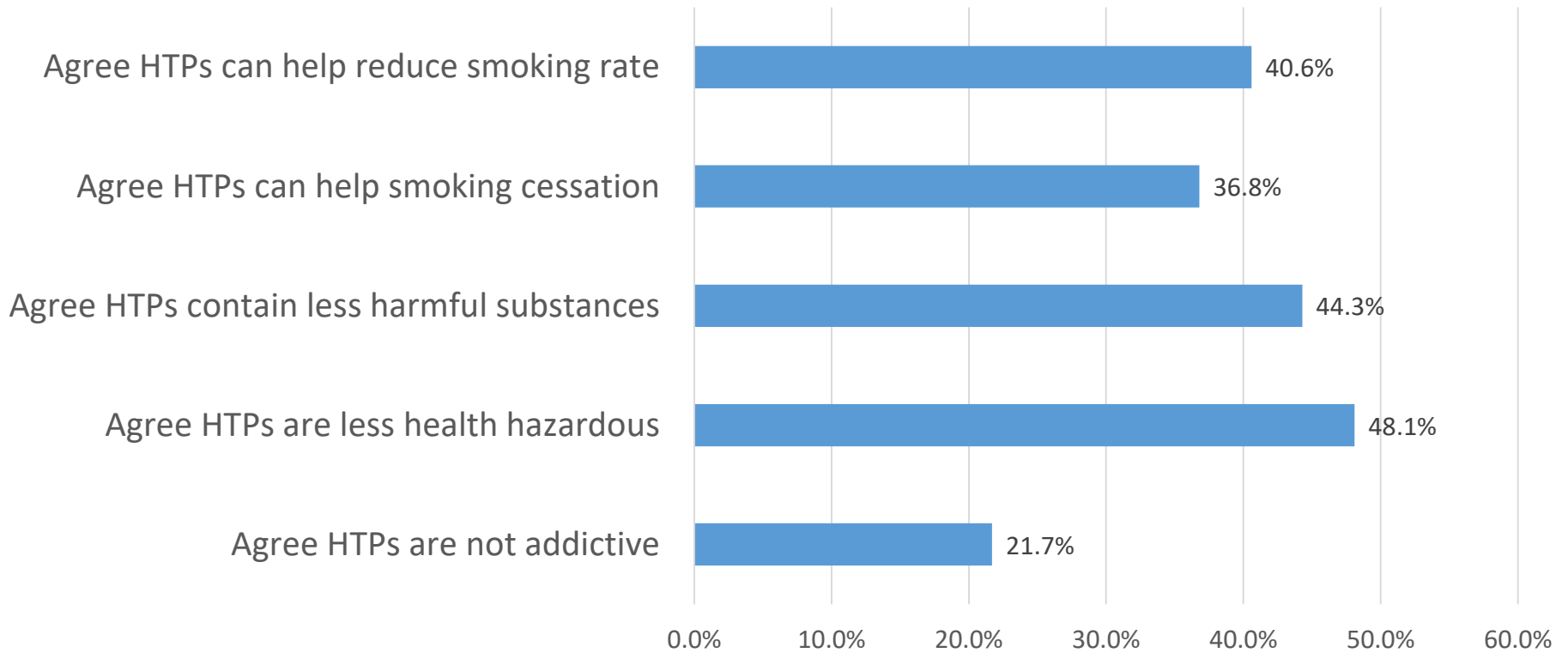
*Total number of surveyed youth smokers = 733

1.2017 – 11.2020₁



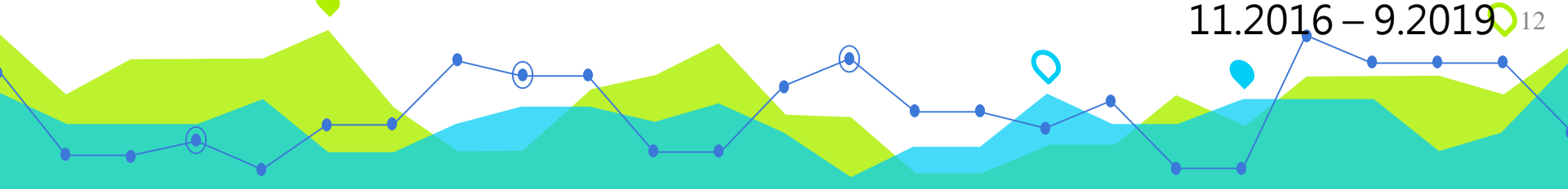
Youth Smokers' Knowledge and Attitudes on Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs)

Smokers' Knowledge and Attitudes on HTPs



Total number of surveyed youth smokers = 106

11.2016 – 9.2019



Lower quit rate for HTPs users compare to that of non-HTPs users

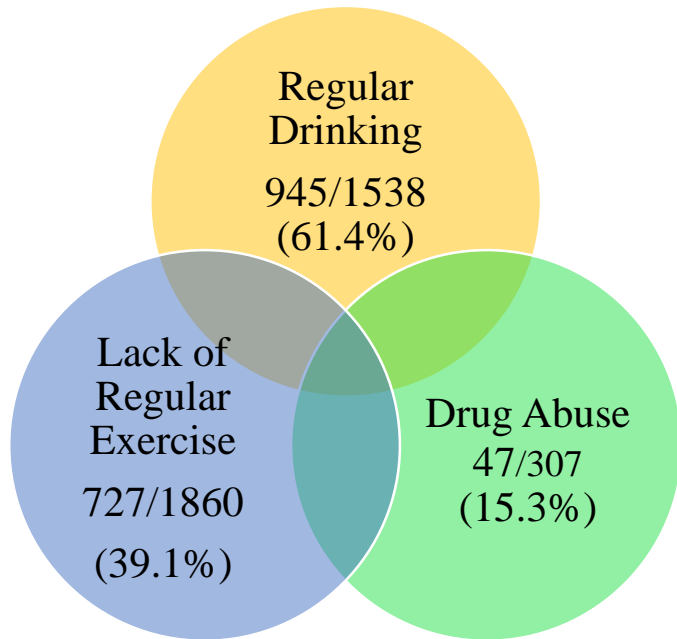
At 6th month follow-up stage

	HTPs users	Non-HTPs users
7-days quit rate	19.0% (15/79)	34.2% (120/351)

*Among 579 participants, 106 (18.3%) were HTPs users and 473 (81.7%) were non-HTPs users



Other Risk Behaviors

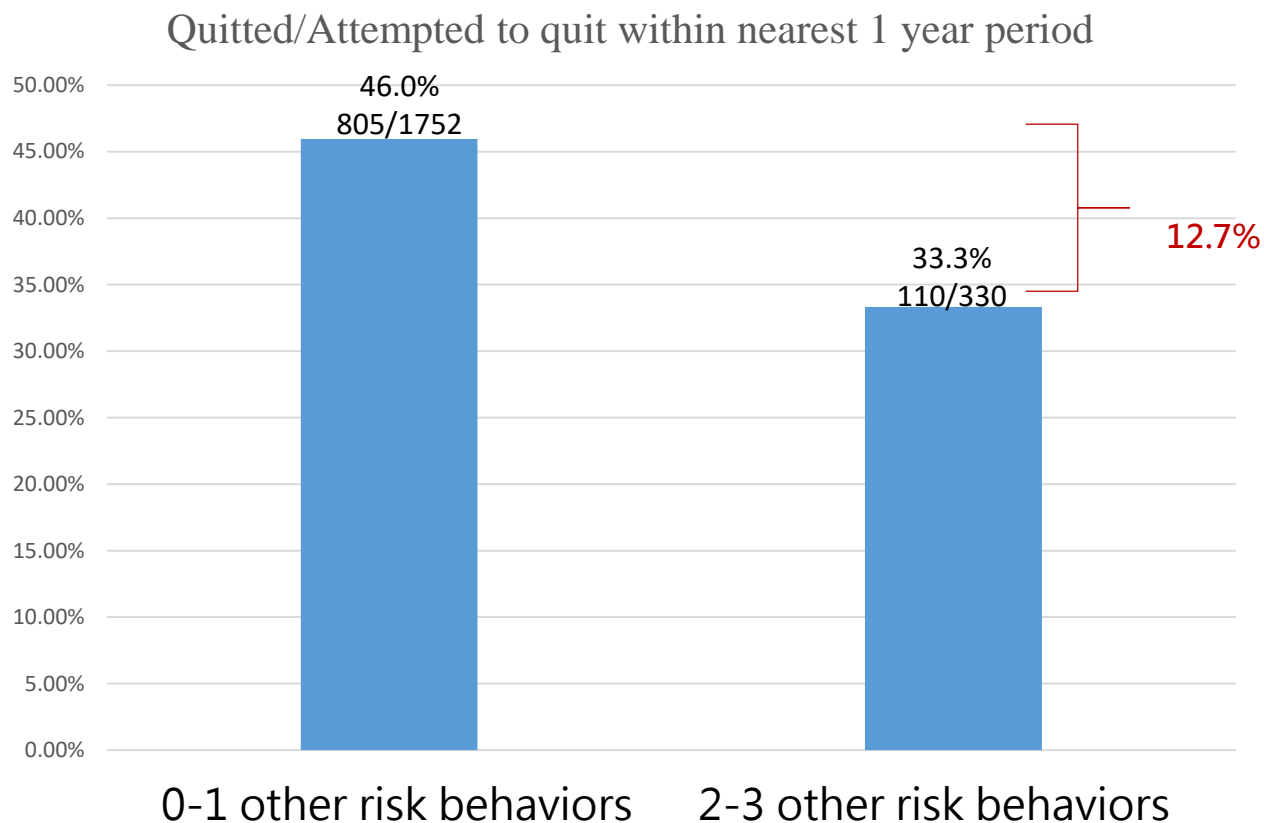


*total surveyed smokers = 2082

Other risk behaviors	%
None (=0)	34.1
One or more than one (≥ 1)	65.9

More than 60% of participants had other risk behaviors

Other Risk Behaviors in Participants



Reducing other risk behaviors can help smoking cessation

*Total number of surveyed youth smokers = 2082

6.2011 - 4.2021

Reasons for surge in use of new tobacco products

NTPs users' opinions

● Increased online marketing

"I'm curious about the ads on Instagram"

● Unregulated underage users

"It's easy to purchase on Instagram, they don't check your age"

● Peer influence

"My friends use e-cigarettes too"

● Convenient to use in public areas

"I don't have to stand next to a trash can"

● Cheaper pricing

"The batteries are durable, saving me money"

● Modern package designs

"The device is rather small and is pretty stylish"

Qualitative (Interview) Study Result (2020)

NTPs users on using both new tobacco products and traditional cigarette

Agree that EC fits more occasions than traditional cigarettes would

“I still smoke traditional cigarettes everyday, but it’s **more convenient** to smoke e-cigarettes when I’m **in the public**”

Using E-cigarettes is less noticeable for school and family

“I only smoke traditional cigarettes after school and e-cigarette when I’m at school because **traditional cigarettes’ odor is too strong**”

Increased side effects due to increased smoking rate

“Using both would **increase my smoking rate**, making me **tired, having mucus, and just generally uncomfortable**”

Harder to quit smoking

“This would actually **increase the difficulty in quitting**, because you might quit traditional cigarettes if you only used e-cigarettes, but then it might lead you back to using traditional cigarettes again”



Outlook

Betterment in **Counselling Workshops** and workshop content

Addition of NTPs content in peer-counsellors training workshops

- Knowledge on NTPs
- Health impacts of NTPs
- Related policies on NTPs

Strengthen management on risk behaviors

Regular exercise
Avoid drinking
Avoid substance abuse
Enhance education on healthier lifestyles

Expecting 50 more peer counsellors and 250 more youth smokers being counselled annually

Support **Total Ban on New Tobacco Products**

Common misconceptions on NTPs

- NTPs being less health hazardous
- NTPs can help quit/reduce smoking
- NTPs can be used in non-smoking areas too



Marketing tactics for boosting NTPs sales

- Varied flavors, modern package design
- Targeted online market for youth smokers
- Marketed through online media platforms, diminishing its harmfulness
- Unclear/misleading ingredient labeling

Attracting more youth smokers to try NTPs

prevents



Total ban of the manufacture, import, sale, and showing of new tobacco products in Hong Kong

Summary

- Help youth smokers in quitting smoking
- Enhance popularity of HKU Youth Quitline
- Spread more smoke-free information to the public

Extend **promotion to online platforms**, enhancing our digital reach



Urge for **tobacco control policies**, call for a **total ban** on new tobacco products, and tobacco tax increase

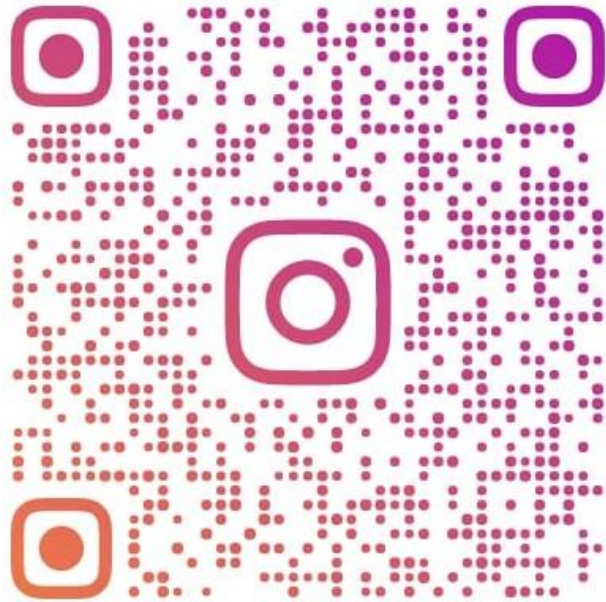
Better our **peer-counsellors training program** and the education on **NTPs related topics** and **risk behavior management**



Increase **our promotional materials' coverage**, expanding connections with schools and organizations for **more outreach opportunities**

Please scan the QR codes below for more information

Instagram



HKUYQL

Facebook



HKU Youth Quitline



Mortality Risk of Smoking

**Professor Tai-Hing Lam ·
BBS, JP**

**Sir Robert Kotewall Professor in Public Health
Chair Professor of Community Medicine
School of Public Health
Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine
The University of Hong Kong**



Smoking kills
1 in every 2

Losing 10 years of life
(WHO, 2008, Jha 2013)

OR EVEN

2 in every 3

(Doll, et al, 2004)

if began smoking at a young age

▶ However, according to findings from the UK, US and Australia studies (2012 - 2013): 2/3 could avoid almost all excess health risks if quit before the age of 40

(Pirie 2012, Thun 2013, Jha 2013, Banks 2015)

- ▶ Utilizing the data from the **Guangzhou Biobank Cohort Study**, the University of Hong Kong, Guangzhou 12th Hospital, and the University of Birmingham, have published a research on smoking and mortality in April, 2018
- ▶ The research involved 21,658 female and 8,284 male participants (aged 50 or above) enrolled from 2003 to 2008, with follow-ups until January, 2016
- ▶ Findings suggested: the **mortality risk of smokers** who were born after 1949 in Guangzhou and other regions with the longest smoking history could have reached **three fold of that of never smokers**. This finding **was consistent with the mortality risks that were found by research conducted in the UK, US and Australia**

(Lam, et al, 2018)

An abstract graphic on the left side of the slide. It consists of a thick yellow vertical bar that is slightly tilted to the right. At its base, there is a dark blue rectangular shape that is also tilted to the right. Below the blue shape is a teal-colored shape that is wider at the top and tapers towards the bottom, resembling a stylized arrow or a decorative element.

Thank you!



**Enact a total ban on all alternative smoking products promptly,
strengthen the multi-pronged tobacco control measures,
to facilitate the progress of tobacco control**

Ms Vienna LAI, MPH(HK)

Executive Director

Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health

29 April 2021



ASPs are harmful to individual and public health

- Alternative smoking products (ASPs) including e-cigarette and heated tobacco products (HTPs) **release harmful chemicals** as cigarettes do. Some chemicals are in **higher levels in HTPs than cigarettes**, including carcinogens (such as formaldehyde and acetaldehyde), some of which are **unique** to ASPs (such as formaldehyde cyanohydrin) .
- **Do not help quitting.** ASPs lead to **dual use** of cigarettes and ASPs and **reduce intention to quit.**
- Promotion strategy targets at young people, ASPs serve as **a gateway to cigarette smoking.**
- Various international health authorities, including **World Health Organization**, clearly pinpoint the health risks of ASPs, reiterate that ASPs **do NOT reduce in harms** and **never be an alternative to cigarettes.**



WHO disagrees with harm reduction claims of ASPs



Recommendation : ... to regulate, including restrict, or prohibit... novel and emerging tobacco products... taking into account of a high level of protection for human health.



E-cigarette contains nicotine and toxic chemicals, which pose health risks, and are undoubtedly harmful and unsafe.



Harmful chemicals in HTPs are similar with those in cigarettes, most of them are carcinogens.

Exposes harmful substances to both smokers and bystanders. Some of harmful substances are specific to HTPs.

Don't help smokers to quit smoking.

Tobacco industry's own data even failed to showed detectable reduction in harms of HTPs than cigarettes.



FDA disagrees with harm reduction claims of ASPs



Food and Drug
Administration, USA



Rejected “risk modification” claims and emphasized HTPs are neither safe nor “FDA approved”

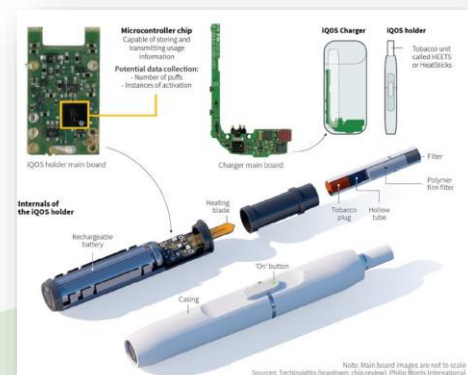
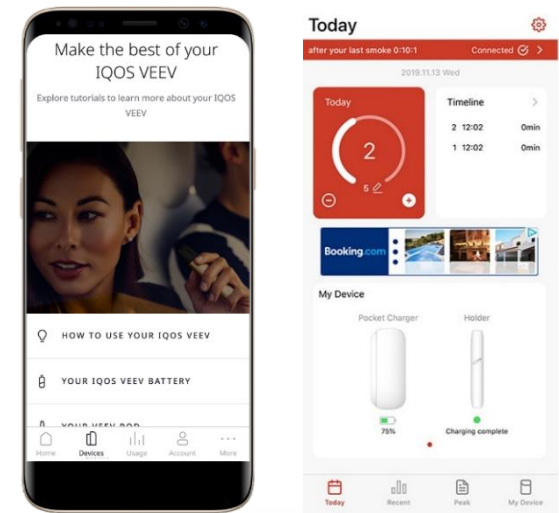
- No sufficient evidence to show that HTP poses less health risks than cigarettes do
- Only authorized the sales of a HTP with “exposure modification” claims, but rejected the application of “risk modification” claims.
- “Exposure modification” claims based on complete switch from cigarettes to HTPs, but most HTP users smoke cigarette concurrently
- FDA’s Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee rejected the risk modification claims by a majority vote.



ASPs collect personal data to develop and promote smoking products

Tobacco industry could **collect personal and usage data through the devices and Mobile App** of ASPs. They could then analyse the characteristic of smoking behavior, improve the products and send designated messages to smoker serving as promotion, reminders of smoking and purchasing HTPs, which is an alternative form of **direct tobacco advertisement and promotion**.

- Some Apps are used to **control the temperature and lighting of devices**, while some share the news, social network and games related to e-cigarette.
- An e-cigarette App aims to **build vaping social network** for user, matching with users in the surroundings through Bluetooth, and **urging e-cigarette smoking**.
- Device of a HTP brand **contains a chip that captures data such as smoking time and frequency, number of puffs, heating temperature and nicotine concentration**, etc. Those data can be stored in users' mobile phone and computer, and **transferred to tobacco industry by Bluetooth**. Through its affiliated App, users can **order HTPs and search for nearby retailers**, in order to promote the HTP sale.



ASPs collect personal data to develop and promote smoking products

- Started from June 2019, USA Apple Store terminated the examination of all applications from e-cigarette related Apps and removed all those Apps that promote and advocate e-cigarette smoking.
- Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Cap. 371) currently prohibits all kinds of tobacco advertising and sale of cigarettes to minors (including online channel).
- There is no law regulating these kinds of tobacco advertisements and information directly sent by tobacco industry to the public. While rule and restrictions are introduced by some platforms on voluntary basis, no regulatory measures could be taken by the Government.
- Difficult to regulate tobacco industry on collection and utilization of personal and usage data, constituting a threat to information security.

Enact a total ban on all ASPs promptly to facilitate the progress of tobacco control

Pass the Bill of total ban on all ASPs promptly

Prevent ASPs from smoking initiation in teenagers and hinderance of smokers to quit.

Strengthen the multi-pronged tobacco control measures

Raising tobacco tax, extending the statutory smoke-free areas, banning tobacco product display at point-of-sale, implementing plain packaging, placing legal onus on venue managers for smoking offences, raising the legal tobacco sales age to 21, tightening law enforcement, more resources for smoking cessation services and smoke-free education, countering tobacco industry interference with tobacco control policies, etc.

Tobacco endgame goal with defined timeline to achieve smoke-free Hong Kong

Reduce smoking prevalence to 7.8% by 2025

Reduce smoking prevalence to 5% or below, achieve the Tobacco Endgame goal

Please visit www.smokefree.hk
for more information



媒體中心

委員會活動

吸煙禍害

戒煙方法

煙害控制

關於我們

無煙代言人「咪點我」

「咪點我」已正式成為香港吸煙與健康委員會的無煙代言人。他將會定期於社交平台發放有線帖文「踎煙」至埋，要向公眾宣傳吸煙禍害，希望推動更多人戒煙及不要嘗試第一口煙，一起健康地陪伴身邊摯愛。

立即編號





Q&A

