

## **Banning Flavors Would Undo the Public Health Benefit of e-Cigarettes**

*To the Editor:* Unflavored liquids are not an adequate option for e-cigarette users.

Vaping without flavor is not very pleasant. Most find it bland, ashy, or worse (“burnt plastic”). Unflavored e-juices are mainly used to dilute strong flavors or to clear out “vaper’s tongue” before rotating to another flavor. They are of instrumental use, but are not a viable substitute in themselves. Flavors are what enable former smokers to stay off of combustible cigarettes.(1) If the FDA bans flavors, many vapers who are former smokers will go back to tobacco. How many would revert we do not yet have the studies to show, which means it is premature to advocate a ban.

We don’t manage the problem of underage drinking by restricting everyone’s alcohol options to flavorless wine and flavorless beer. To move forward, we should enforce existing laws prohibiting sales to minors, encourage states to raise their age minimums to 21, educate our youth about the dangers of nicotine--and persuade them that vaping is “what old smokers do,” not “what cool kids do.”

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(1) <https://harmreductionjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12954-018-0238-6>