

The association between risk perceptions, anxiety, and changes in tobacco and nicotine product use behaviours due to COVID-19 in May-June 2020 in Israel

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Introduction Methods Results

Conflicting evidence about a possible protective effect of nicotine on COVID-19, with messaging by health organizations about negative effects of tobacco/nicotine use on COVID-19, and COVID-19-induced anxiety, may have led to changes in tobacco/nicotine use. This study explored anxiety, risk perceptions, and changes in use of inhaled tobacco and nicotine products due to COVID-19 in Israel.

A national cross-sectional survey was conducted in Israel in the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic (May-June 2020), with 420 individuals who reported ever-use of combustible cigarettes (CCs) (n=391), nargila (n=193), or electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes)/IQOS (n=52). We investigated changes in product use, risk perceptions, and anxiety using multinomial logistic regression.

Most respondents did not change their frequency of product use (CCs: 81.0%, nargila: 88.2%, e-cigarettes/IQOS: 96.8%). Some small decreases (CCs: -7.2%, nargila: -3.2%, e-cigarettes/IQOS: -2.4%) and increases (CCs: +11.8%, nargila: +8.6%, e-cigarettes/IQOS: +0.9%) were observed. 55.6% of respondents smoked in the home prior to COVID-19, with 4.0% decreasing and 12.6% increasing due to COVID-19. Higher levels of anxiety due to COVID-19 were associated with increased home smoking (OR=1.59, 95% CI: 1.04, 2.42, p=0.02).

