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Background & Purpose

- Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) continue to be a popular tobacco product among young adults, many of whom report a lack of knowledge about the products and their possible harms, particularly during their reproductive years.
- Nicotine is a known reproductive toxicant that contributes to poor outcomes across the reproductive life course, yet much of the public health messaging around ENDS products has focused on adolescents, parents, teachers, and influencers in teens' communities.
- There is currently a lack of messaging targeted to women of reproductive age, including pregnant women and parents of young children, and limited knowledge about the types of messages that would be appealing and effective with this demographic.

Study Purpose: Explore reproductive age women's reactions to ENDS-related health messages

Methods

- We interviewed 97 women between the ages of 18-35 from February – May 2019, recruited through health fairs, flyers, digital advertisements, and college organizations.
- Interviews lasted about an hour, were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and were conducted individually and in groups of 2-10 women.
- Transcripts were coded and analyzed inductively based on emergent themes; QSR International's Nvivo 12 was used to organize the data and facilitate analysis.
- A total of 25 message types (62 messages total) were shown to the subjects in an iterative fashion; messages were removed and added based on feedback.
- Women were asked for general feedback about e-cigarette messages, as well as specific questions regarding language, aesthetic preferences, message impact, and motivation to seek more information or change behavior.

Women want specific, evidence-based information about ENDS to be able to make an informed decision about use.

Desire more information on chemicals in ENDS

"If you're trying to convince somebody to do something... you have in depth facts... So, you tell me I should stop vaping. Why should I stop vaping?" (ID 008)

"I feel like people have it in their head that vaping is better than cigarettes...So it's like, "Oh, well, you're not really smoking. You're not getting no nicotine," but it's a lot of other different chemicals. Like if there was a way to display, you know, the harsh chemicals that are in it just as well as cigarettes...but you know, you don't really know what they're putting in those vapes." (ID 022)

Desire more information on health effects of ENDS

"...nicotine affects your baby's brain. I want to know, what does it do to my baby's brain, you know? Does... it cause brain damage? Can it cause death?" (ID 001)

"Yeah, I don't think people care about nicotine... they're just like, 'oh yeah, it keeps me addicted but what does nicotine really do to me?" (ID 017)

"...it's not gonna make me want to go get help because it's not showing me any reasons why I should quit. It's not telling me the harm that it's doing to my body." (ID 012)

Addiction language does not resonate without providing additional information

"I don't think that when you have a vaping problem you binge vapes and... let your life fall apart.. This seems a little dramatic to me. (ID 006)"

"...there are lots of reasons why people decide to quit or reduce... their use of any sort of substance, and so... this idea you have to... hit rock bottom before you... decide to quit is not helpful and it doesn't reach as many people who might be trying to... cut down on their use or stop altogether." (Grp 007)

"...my mother-in-law ...sits on her couch all day long vaping. So it has taken over her life whether she wants to admit it or not. But it's the same with the addicted verbiage. No-one really wants to say anything is out of their control." (ID 011)

With emerging information about ENDS, static digital or print ads with general messages are insufficient and easily dismissed.

