PUFF-LIKE DISPOSABLE ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

EXPERT CONSENSUS ON THEIR REGULATION USING A FAST-TRACK DELPHI PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

Discreet in use, single-use and with a high addictive potential, new puff-like disposable electronic cigarettes raise many public health issues.

To support a rapid and informed political decision, we used our new fast-track Delphi approach to develop consensual agreements amongst tobacco control **experts** on the following target question:

« What are the aspects on which new puff-like disposable electronic cigarettes should be regulated, and in what way? »



Four disposable e-cigarettes (indicated by the arrows), among various pens and highlighters

Profile of the 23 experts who participated in the fast-track Delphi process

	n	Proportion (n=23)
Gender		
Feminine	16	70%
Masculine	7	30%
Field of professional expertise		
Smoking prevention	10	44%
Health promotion and prevention	7	30%
Clinical intervention for smoking cessation	3	13%
Fundamental or clinical research	2	9%
Family / community medicine or psychiatry	1	4%

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METHOD: A FAST-TRACK DELPHI PROCESS

Status	Thresholds	
Consensual agreement reached	Median ≥ 7 on the 1-9 Likert scale (agreement)	
	and interquartile range (IQR) ≤ 3 scale points (consensus)	

Mid-may 2022

Invitation sent to 38 experts



Step 1 **June 17, 2022**

13 experts (34%) 28 proposals generated; 17 selected



Step 2 June 20-26, 2022

23 experts (60%) 21 statements (3 reached consensual agreement)



Step 3 June 27 – July 4, 2022

21 experts (91% of step 2 respondents) 23 statements (18 reached consensual agreement)

Selection and recruitment of 38 thematic experts from the French-speaking part of Switzerland

Group meeting following an adapted version of the Nominal Group Technique (NGT):

- Phase 1 : individual ideas generation
- > Phase 2 : pooling of ideas through successive rounds of discussion
- Phase 3 : discussion of clarification and structuring of thematic proposals
- Phase 4 : prioritization vote

E-questionnaire (REDCap®)

Opinion quantification and expression on thematic statements, formulated from the proposals selected at the end of step 1

E-questionnaire (REDCap®)

Opinion re-quantification and expression on thematic statements that have not reached consensual agreement at the end of step 2, and reformulated based on comments from experts

RESULTS

21 statements out of 26 (80%) reached a consensual agreement between tobacco control experts:

Regulation of product composition and marketing

- Additional warnings in the form of pictograms
- the list of components*
- requirement: packaging and device
- sponsorship
- Mandatory publication of Dual neutrality Total ban on advertising, promotion and Strict limitation of flavors According to marketing aspects
- > Sales and consumption restrictions and taxation
- Prohibition of sale to
- Sales locations subject to authorization
- Consumption restrictions for public areas*
- tax to prevention
- minimum tax)
- cigarettes

- minors*
- Allocation of a portion of the
- Tax proportional to the quantity of nicotine (with
- Selling price ≥ conventional

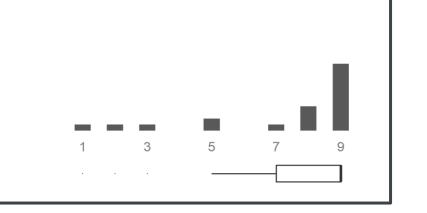
Control measures and data collection

- More controls, with focus on age, advertising and nicotine levels
- Annual collection of consumption data



> Sale prohibition

Total ban on the sale of the disposable product



*Provided with the future federal law on tobacco products and electronic cigarettes (LPTab/TabPG; effective in 2024 at the earliest)

CONCLUSION

The new fast-track Delphi process allowed, in an 18-days interval, the development and quantification of consensual agreements between Swiss tobacco control experts on the regulation of puff-like disposable electronic cigarettes. The expert panel recommends a ban on the sale of the disposable product. As it is not likely, a strict regulation should come into force for various aspects such as product composition and marketing control or sales restrictions - regulations that should go further than the current European directive and the future Swiss law (LPTab/TabPG).

The findings will be useful to support and guide political decision making from a public health and environmental perspective, as well as to provide guidance for the development of clinical recommendations and patient counselling.