



**Health Diplomats**  
**Vaping research**  
**MALAYSIA TOPLINE**

**Research Report**  
**January 2022**

Undertaken by

**KANTAR**

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## MALAYSIA

### Usage and motivations

A large proportion use multiple products: Most specifically, those who vape or use heated tobacco product also smoke tobacco cigarettes. Most respondents were regular vapers (i.e. vaping weekly), while heated tobacco products are less used and oral tobacco products are only used by a minority.

The main reason for vaping is to help to cut down on the amount smoked, while vaping is also perceived as a recreational activity used to relax, for enjoyment and for the taste.

Although vaping was used as a way to cut down on smoking and after trying to quit smoking on several occasions, the most common approach used in these previous attempts was using nicotine replacement therapy. Only a very small number of vapers took up e-cigarettes because they were advised to do so by a health professional and when this was the case the advice was usually given because they had asked for it.

Nevertheless, compared to other products (i.e. heated and oral tobacco), vaping is much more likely to be used for the purposes of helping to cut down on smoking. By contrast, heated tobacco products are more likely to be used to protect others from second hand smoke and oral tobacco products are more likely to be used to relax and for enjoyment.

	Vaping (n=447)	Heated tobacco products (n=255)	Oral tobacco products (n=180)
To help you to cut down the amount you smoke	30%	25%	24%
The taste	26%	22%	19%
For enjoyment	25%	27%	24%
To use in places where you can't smoke	24%	20%	21%
The smell	21%	20%	15%
To relax	20%	20%	24%
To help you to stop smoking entirely	19%	16%	23%
Less harmful for the environment	18%	18%	12%
More sociable	18%	22%	10%
To protect others from second-hand smoke	17%	18%	23%
To save money	16%	11%	19%
For health reasons	12%	15%	14%
Was suggested by a friend	11%	16%	13%
Advised by a health professional	5%	8%	11%

## Use and approval by others

Usage of cigarettes and vaping by family and peers is high while use of heated tobacco products and oral tobacco products is more limited.

Whereas vaping (and, to a lesser extent, heated tobacco products) had high approval levels, there was a more negative perception of tobacco cigarettes and a low level of approval for oral tobacco products.

## Perceptions of risk

Tobacco cigarettes are perceived as the most harmful nicotine product and nicotine replacement therapy products as the least harmful. The harm from smoking cigarettes was attributed to the tobacco burning rather than the nicotine.

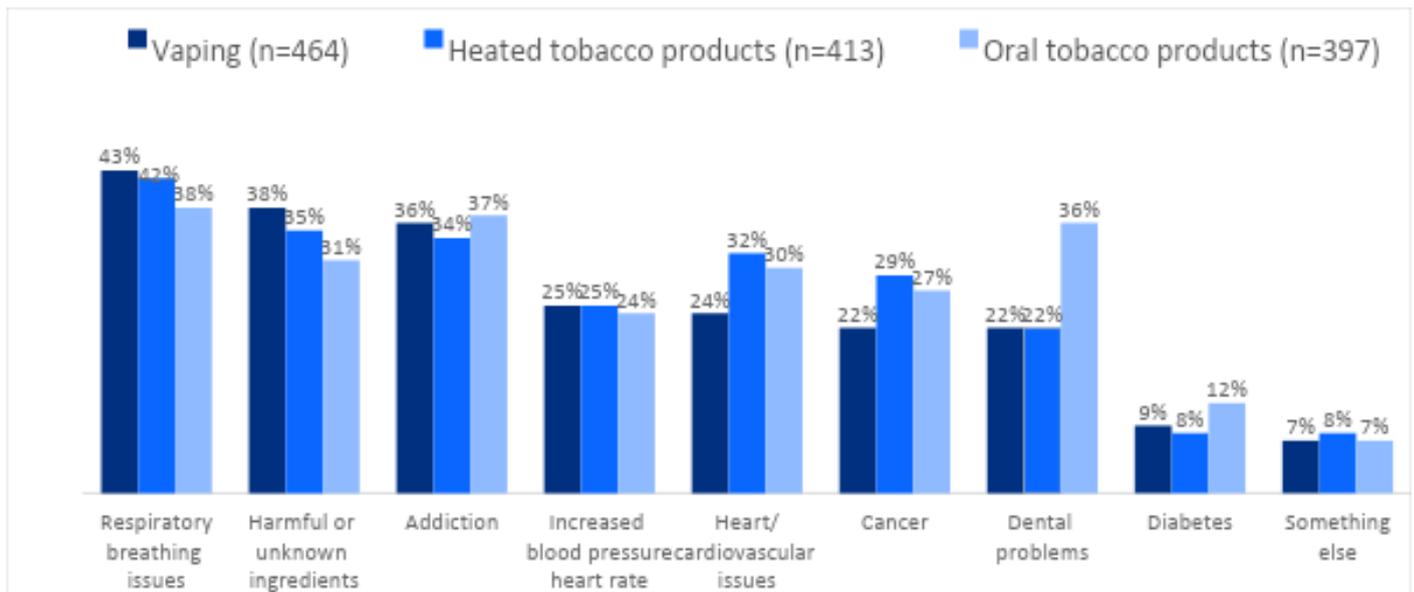
While more people believe that e-cigarettes are less harmful than tobacco cigarettes, it is notable that a significant minority do not consider this to be the case as about a third of those interviewed considered e-cigarettes to be equally harmful or more harmful than tobacco cigarettes.

Correspondingly, a large percentage perceive a number of health risks linked to vaping – in particular respiratory issues and harmful or unknown ingredients, but there are also some concerns over addiction and heart issues.

Those interviewed were aware of vaping related issues in their country or elsewhere. There was a high level of concern that vaping units used illegal ingredients.

Heated tobacco products were seen as being a higher health risk than vaping and almost as harmful as tobacco cigarettes. As with vaping, respondents were concerned with respiratory issues and harmful or unknown ingredients.

Concerns over the risks of oral tobacco products were greater, with the majority considering this product more harmful or the same as tobacco cigarettes, with high levels of concerns regarding addiction, respiratory issues and dental problems.



## Regulations

Most respondents were concerned that e-cigarettes products are not regulated and they support government regulations. There is strong support for quality and sales to minors regulations.

There is also support for a tax on e-liquid used in vape, however, the tax (as announced during the Budget 2022) was perceived as too high.

There is also strong support regulations on alternative nicotine products (if there was evidence that making these products more available would help smokers switch from tobacco cigarettes).

## In conclusion

The top reasons show e-cigarettes are currently used by many vapers as an aid to cut down on smoking cigarettes (30%) or to quit smoking completely in Malaysia (19%). In addition, users were also choosing to vape for a diversity of other reasons such as enjoyment or relaxation.

And while vaping is, on balance, more likely to receive approval from peers and family than smoking cigarettes or using heated or oral tobacco products, it is notable that many vapers still expect to receive disapproval for using e-cigarettes.

There is a need for regulations for e-cigarettes in particular focusing on quality and usage by minors.