

UK Research Priorities for Electronic Cigarettes: A James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership

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For which topic were research priorities identified?

electronic cigarettes

In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Europe - United Kingdom

Why was it conducted at all?

E-cigarette research is a relatively new topic; therefore, it is essential to identify and address research priorities that are relevant to people who smoke or vape, and healthcare and public health professionals (HCPHP).

What was the objective?

to bring together people who smoke or vape, people who do not smoke and healthcare professionals to identify and agree on priorities for electronic cigarette research in the UK

What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 10 research questions

How long did the research prioritization take?

June 2018 - September 2019

Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

JLA method

How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: setting up PSP: forming steering group. Step 2: collecting research questions about e-cigarettes: via survey, participants were asked: "What questions about electronic cigarettes would you like to see answered by research?", 1887 uncertainties submitted. Step 3: data processing: uncertainties reviewed, out-of-scope questions removed, list of indicative uncertainties created, uncertainties answered by published systematic reviews removed, 1632 uncertainties remained, resulting in 52 indicative uncertainties representing 12 broad themes. Step 4: interim ranking: participants were asked to identify and rank their top 10 questions from the longlist of 52 indicative questions, top 15 questions for healthcare and public health professionals and top 15 questions for consumers/public selected, resulting in top 21 (9 questions common in both groups), steering group voted for their top five questions from next 10 most popular questions, a total of 26 questions moved forward for discussion in the final prioritization workshop. Step 5: final prioritization: workshop: final top 26 uncertainties shared with participants before workshop in order for them to prioritize questions in rank order and be prepared for discussion, blend of whole group and subgroup discussions, small group rankings, plenary rankings, resulting in consensus on top 10

Which stakeholders took part?

Consumers, healthcare and public health professionals. Survey: 765 participants: 597 (78%) consumers/public, 168 (22%) HCPHPs. Interim ranking: 415 participants. Workshop: 23 participants: 15 HCPHPs (two of these were steering group members) and 8 non-HCPHPs (four of these were "patient representatives" from the steering group).

How were stakeholders recruited?

The survey was circulated via steering group members, partner organizations (PHE, Cancer Research UK (CRUK), Action on Smoking and Health, National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training, Royal College of Physicians, New Nicotine Alliance), and was available on the UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies (UKCTAS) website. It was promoted on Facebook and Twitter. The second survey was sent to all people who had registered an interest in participating in the next stage following the initial survey, and also circulated via steering group members, partner organizations and social media.

Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders not only participated but were also actively involved in the research prioritization process: They were part of a steering group. The steering group consisted of 12 members: 5 patients (representing people who smoke and/or vape) and 4 healthcare professionals (a midwife, a stop smoking specialist, a respiratory consultant, a public health representative), 3 academics. The members coordinated the process, were involved in data processing and interim ranking, and took the final priorities to funders.