

Invited Commentary

An Inexpensive Intervention to Reduce e-Cigarette Use Among Young Adults

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The US Surgeon General has declared e-cigarette use among young adults an epidemic.¹ A 2021 meta-analysis found that e-cigarette users had nearly 5 times greater odds of subsequent initiation of cigarette smoking.² Interventions to decrease e-cigarette use among young adults are desperately needed.

In this issue of *JAMA Internal Medicine*, Graham et al³ report the results of a double-blind randomized clinical trial examining a text messaging intervention that uses cognitive and behavioral coping skills to promote abstinence of e-cigarette use among 18- to 24-year-olds. When compared to the control, the intervention significantly increased the rate of 30-day point prevalence abstinence at 7 months postrandomization (18.6% vs 24.1%; rate ratio, 1.29; 95% CI, 1.11-1.50). This work adds to existing evidence suggesting that text message-based interventions, particularly those

that incorporate social cognitive theory, can facilitate combustible cigarette abstinence among young adults.^{4,5} Social cognitive theory, as developed by Albert Bandura,⁶ situates behavior in the context of an individual's internal thought processes and external social environment and elucidates how these factors influence motivations and outcome expectations. Given the effect of peers on behavior, it stands to reason that improving young adults' perceived self-efficacy in the face of social pressures may then foster improved rates of e-cigarette abstinence.

The study by Graham et al³ had limitations, including inability to biochemically validate abstinence and non-differential attrition of participants. Nevertheless, it represents an inexpensive, publicly available intervention that uses technology popular with young adults. We hope to see more randomized studies that take advantage of the power of text messaging to change deleterious behaviors.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

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