

Snuffing, Smoking, Piping...now Vaping

By

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The appearance of a cigarette has for too long remained the same: a long, drab-looking, cylindrical item. There is no way of enhancing the appearance of a cigarette other than placing a thin gold or silver band around the filter. But the filter will also be discarded after the cigarette has been smoked. For some youngsters who still have a sense of decency and shame, they still regard smoking as a vice. They will hide the cigarette behind their back or maybe even drop it into their pockets hurriedly without stamping it out, when their parents or an elderly person walks by! Smoking also leaves a bad odour on ones clothes, in the air, and the lips and teeth of a smoker is spoilt over the years.

There must be a way to make such a major health-hazard like smoking look more glamorous and attractive. If the hookah industry could do it, why can't the cigarette industry also do it? Scientifically, smoking unfiltered tobacco through a hookah pipe is more dangerous than smoking a cigarette with a filter, but if you mould the hookah device into a soccer ball, an airplane, the Eiffel tower or any object that takes your mind away from the suicidal act of inhaling poison, then you can call the bluff. The drug industry has evolved, the pipe industry has evolved and the hookah industry has also evolved, but not the cigarette industry. And cigarettes have paid a heavy price for its inability of not becoming more fashionable and more presentable soon enough.

But now that's all in the past. Smoking has just become more fashionable, more dangerous, and more profitable. It's now a mini-hookah in the pocket, just more stylish, elegant, petite and pleasant. You can now smoke an e-cig in front of your father and say: "Dad, don't stress. It's just harmless vapours. Look, it even smells like the strawberry and cream dessert we had after supper last night!" We have not only desensitized ourselves to the immense health hazards of smoking, but we have actually made the act of poisoning ourselves seem fashionable, cool and attractive.

E-cigarettes have become so popular that as 2014 drew to a close, the [Oxford Dictionary announced that its "Word of the Year](#)

" would be VAPE. Other words, most of which were associated with sin and evil, were also up for grabs. These were BAE (

an expression of lust

for one's illicit romantic partner

), BUDTENDER (

a salesman in a

[cannabis](#)

/dagga

shop

), NORMCORE (

a trend in which

unfashionable clothing is worn as a

[deliberate](#)

fashion statement

) and SLACKTIVISM (

actions performed via the internet in support of a political or social cause, but requiring no involvement, e.g. signing an online petition to stop the genocide in Burma, but doing nothing else

). The word "Vape" was the winner.

Vape originated as an abbreviation of [vapour](#) or [vaporize](#) . The verb means 'to inhale and [ex](#)
[hale](#)

the vapour produced by an

[electronic cigarette](#)

or similar device.’ Although e-cigarettes was commercially introduced in 2009, usage of the word

Vape

peaked in April 2014 when it was used 300 times more worldwide than the year before. We now have a whole list of related words:

vape lounge

,

vape fluid

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vape juice

,

e-juice

,

carto

, and

vaporium.

As vaping has become a multi-million rand industry, did everyone suddenly become more health conscious or fashion conscious?

Better alternative?

Electronic cigarettes are battery-operated devices that resemble traditional cigarettes; instead of tobacco, they generally contain cartridges filled with nicotine and other chemicals. When the e-cigarette is used, the liquid chemicals in the cartridge are turned into a vapor or steam that is inhaled by the smoker. They have been marketed as a safe alternative to tobacco, or for those who wish to quit smoking. But is this really the case?

So far, evidence suggests that e-cigarettes may be a little safer than regular cigarettes. The biggest danger from tobacco is the smoke, and e-cigarettes don't burn. However, is this “little safer” argument sufficient to categorize it as harmless? Is drinking a little poison better than

drinking a lot? Poison is poison, the only difference is that in this instance, you will be paying a little more to let yourself suffer and die a little slower.

The e-cig, as fancy as it may look, is still harmful and defeats the purpose. Here's why:

1. The chief ingredient is still the killer ingredient: nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive and the chief cause of lung cancer and heart attacks. When one stops using it, withdrawal symptoms including feeling irritable, depressed, restless and anxious, will be felt;
2. It also contains toxic chemicals found in antifreeze, such as nitrosamine;
3. Using an e-cigarette for five just minutes restricts one's lung function. Studies have shown that propylene glycol, the source of the e-cigarettes' visible vapor, can bring on respiratory irritation and increase the chance of developing asthma. A 42-year-old woman who had used e-cigarettes for seven months experienced shortness of breath, coughing, and fever over the same period. The diagnosis was lipoid pneumonia - a chronic inflammation caused by fatty substances (lipids) in the lungs - due to e-cigarette use. The cause was repeated exposure to glycerin-based oils found in e-cigarette nicotine vapor. So, although cigarette smoke is harmful, but the pleasantly-smelling vapours are just as lethal;
4. Smoking an e-cigarette makes you less likely to cough, even when coughing would benefit your health. Researchers asked 30 nonsmokers to puff an e-cigarette 30 times in a 15-minute period. After puffing, people in the study were less sensitive to capsaicin, a component of chili peppers that induces coughing. You might think stopping a cough would be a positive side effect, but coughing keeps you from choking and removes agents that may cause infection;
5. According to Prof. Daniel Sullivan from the University of Alabama School of Medicine, there is a correlation between coil temperature and the creation of harmful chemicals like acrolein, acetaldehyde and formaldehyde in the e-cigarette. According to the degree of the heat, new harmful chemicals are created;

6. Researchers also tested the effects of flavored e-cigarette liquid on calcium in the lungs and found that not all flavors had the same effect. Five of 13 flavors tested caused changes to calcium signaling in the lungs. Some of these were cinnamon candy, banana pudding and menthol tobacco;

7. Evidence is growing that e-cigarettes probably aren't an effective way to quit smoking. According to studies, using e-cigarettes improved the likelihood that a smoker would quit smoking cigarettes for the first month only, but the effect dissipated after 3. If you do not quit smoking on the e-cig after a month, you are hooked for life on a more expensive option.

Lastly, it must be known that among all of the alternative tobacco products, e-cigarettes are the least regulated. They have no warning labels and can be sold to people of any age. People with cancer or those who want to quit smoking should rather use approved methods. Islamically, if any device is shown to even contain slight harm, it will be forbidden. Drinking 100 mls of urine, instead of 1000 mls, doesn't change the fact that the urine has now become acceptable. Urine is urine, and nicotine is nicotine