

A Note on Cigarettes

Somchai Bovornkitti

During the years 1952 to 2000, I work as a chest physician. At the beginning of the new century, I began to work at The Royal Society of Thailand, where I developed a deep interest in environmental medicine and genomics.

My early knowledge on cigarettes may be started to the time I was student at Brompton Chest Hospital in London in 1953, and subsequently at Bellevue Hospital in New York and at the Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital in Bangkok. As a chest physician, I gained specialist knowledge of and experience with diseases caused by cigarette smoke, namely chronic bronchitis, pulmonary emphysema and lung cancer.

While working at Siriraj Hospital, I started the Smokers' Clinic¹ to help addicts stop smoking. It was a total failure as they stopped smoking cigarettes only when they died. Of course, over the years I had tried many methods to help smokers to quit their habit. For instance, the strategy of getting smokers to take nicotine chewing gum² failed to help them quit smoking; instead, the smokers gained a greater appreciation for their consequently higher intake of nicotine!

Some years ago, there was news that electronic cigarettes might have potential for helping smokers quit their smoking habit, but the Thai government immediately banned electronic cigarettes, an event that left me undisturbed at the time.

However, an article entitled "Electronic Cigarettes," published in the 2018 April issue of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians Internal Medicine Journal,³ showed that it is highly possible cigarettes to assist smokers overcome their addiction to regular cigarettes which emit various toxic substances, including carcinogens, that adversely impact smokers' health. Smoking regular tobacco cigarettes can result in a number of serious complications, such as chronic bronchitis, pulmonary emphysema and bronchial cancers.

Therefore, I wrote a paper entitled "Nicotine Vaping Electronic Cigarettes," which was published in the Thammasart Medical Journal, April-June 2018 issue.⁴

Currently, my knowledge of “heat-not-burn cigarettes (HNBC) came about as a result of a call from two executives from Philip Morris International. They presented me with a stack of scientific documents relating to the new non-combustible cigarettes consistent with my knowledge that it is highly possible to use this new technique to assist tobacco addicts to stop using regular tobacco cigarettes.

To address the concerns of physicians about the new technique, I wrote another article on electronic cigarettes, including HNBC, for the 2018 June issue of another Thai Medical Journal.⁵

References

1. Bovornkitti S. Smokers’ Clinic. *Siriraj Med Gaz* 1994; 18: 56-60.
2. Bovornkitti S. A smoking cessation technique: taking out a painful thorn with another thorn. *Royal Institute Gazette* 1994, pp. 13-4.
3. Mendelsohn CP. Electronic cigarettes in physician practice. *Intern Med J* 2018; pp. 391-6.
4. Bovornkitti S. Nicotine Vaping Electronic cigarettes. *Thammasart Med J* 2018;18: in press.
5. Bovornkitti S. Electronic cigarettes; nicotine vaping vs. heat not burn tobacco cigarettes. *Bhudhachinaraj Med J* 2018;35:in press.