Outdoor vaping prevalence

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IUHPE Conference, Rotorua, April 2019
Aim

To observe the relative prevalence of:
(i) smoking and vaping outside hospitality venues
(ii) smoking and vaping among those walking in downtown pavement areas

Background

• New Zealand does not regulate vaping in outdoor public places (there are some ‘educational’ policies)
• Organisations (e.g., individual businesses) may ban vaping on their properties
Methods for hospitality venues

- 56 hospitality venues in central Wellington (capital of NZ) were selected

- 2422 venue observations recorded the number of seated:
  - patrons
  - smokers
  - vapers
  - children

Observations were made in May 2018, during:
- 3.30pm - 9pm on weekdays
- 12pm - 9pm on weekends
Circuit of venues
Methods for downtown streets

In three defined pavement areas:

- 121 x ten minute observations
- Pedestrians passing within a 5m radius of observer
- Recorded:
  - Time
  - Number of active smokers and active vapers
Results: Hospitality venues

- 10 active smokers to 1 active vaper

- *Point prevalence* of vaping = 1.4% of patrons

- Active vapers were 6 times more likely to be observed at venues *without* children present, compared to venues with children (95%CI: 1.9 to 19.2)
Results: Downtown streets

- 2.9 active smokers to 1 active vaper

- On average, six active vapers and 17 active smokers were observed per hour across the 3 locations
Discussion: Methods issues

- Sometimes difficult to distinguish vaping devices from other items, such as phones and keys.
- Issue increasing with discrete pod-style devices.
- Vaping may be more intermittent than smoking (e-cigarettes may be pocketed between puffs).
- So observations of active vaping less likely, compared to active smoking?
Discussion: Research implications

Fieldwork required to assess:

• Vaping in other settings and jurisdictions

• Trends in visible vaping over time

• Policy effects with before/after observations
Discussion: Policies?

• Secondhand vapour in proximity to:
  – Seating
  – Crowded sidewalks
  – Entrances and windows

• Vape industry stances
  – ‘Courtesy’ v rules

• Normalisation of nicotine use?