

Review of: "[Commentary] On Heated Tobacco Products and the Importance of Science-Based Assessments and Product Classification"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is an interesting topic since smoking, in spite of being the subject of intense campaigns for its harmful consequences for human health, is still an extended habit all over the world. In this scene, the tobacco industry came up with new potentially lower-risk products.

Supporting these new products, the present commentary argues that heated tobacco products (HTPs) are different and less harmful than tobacco combustion products, and that comparisons should be based on the ratio of use rather than a tobacco-weight basis.

It is clear that emissions from HTPs are different from those from combustible cigarettes since HTP aerosol does contain much less incomplete combustion products compared to cigarette smoke. However, it is not harmless. Epidemiological evidence remains to be presented that lower levels of tobacco-related toxicants make HTPs less harmful than cigarettes. Are there safe limits of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) when inhaled on a daily basis? When reducing the number of compounds at levels above 100 ng/HeatStick from approximately 4800 in cigarette smoke to 532 in HTP aerosol, are we eliminating "the bad ones"?

Regarding the second aspect, I agree with the authors that cigarettes and HTP should be compared on a typical usage basis.

Finally, I find the comment clear and well-written.