

Review of: "Randomized Experimental Test of a Reduced-Exposure Message for an E-cigarette: Comprehension and Related Misperceptions"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The discussion provides a comprehensive analysis of the research findings related to the comprehension of a reduced-exposure message about JUUL, an electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS). Here are some comments on different aspects of the discussion:

1. **Comprehension of Key Points:**

- The study effectively demonstrated good comprehension among participants regarding the key points of the reduced-exposure message. The focus on the understanding of harm reduction and the intended audience (smokers) was well-received.

2. **Attribution of Risk:**

- The discussion appropriately highlights that large majorities attributed some degree of risk to the ENDS product. This is an important aspect to consider, as it reflects a balanced understanding of the potential risks associated with using JUUL.

3. **Message Clarity and Language:**

- The discussion rightly addresses potential issues related to message clarity, especially concerning the interpretation of "harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke." The acknowledgment of potential participant confusion due to the wording and the distinction between cigarette smoke and JUUL aerosol is insightful.

4. **Intended Audience Understanding:**

- The study effectively assessed the participants' understanding of the intended audience for the message, emphasizing that over 90% recognized that it was not intended for non-users of tobacco. This clarity is crucial for targeted communication strategies.

5. **Impact on Smoking Behavior:**

- The study successfully explored participants' understanding that achieving the claimed exposure reduction required complete smoking cessation. It is noteworthy that a small percentage of participants thought a reduction in cigarette

consumption by half could also be effective, emphasizing the need for precision in messaging.

6. Health Literacy Considerations:

- The discussion appropriately considers health literacy, acknowledging that individuals with lower health literacy demonstrated less understanding but without suggesting that the message itself promoted confusion. This is a nuanced and important observation.

7. Limitations:

- The discussion transparently addresses the limitations of the study, including sample representation and programming errors. This adds credibility to the research and encourages future refinement of methodology.

8. Future Research Directions:

- The discussion appropriately highlights the need for further analysis to explore downstream effects, such as belief in the message, overall risk perceptions, and intentions to use JUUL. This indicates a comprehensive approach to understanding the broader impact of health communication.

9. Strengths:

- The discussion appropriately acknowledges the substantial strengths of the study, including the large and diverse sample, the inclusion of individuals with limited health literacy, and the availability of risk perception data.

10. Generalization of Findings:

- The discussion wisely notes that the results may differ for other messages or products, emphasizing the importance of context specificity in health communication research.

In summary, the discussion provides a thorough and balanced analysis of the research findings, acknowledging both strengths and limitations. It effectively lays the groundwork for future research and emphasizes the importance of considering various factors in health communication strategies related to ENDS.