

# Review of: "Tobacco- and Nicotine-Containing Product Use in Italy: Results From Two Cross-Sectional Studies"

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This is a manuscript with a lot of interesting data on the real-life use of HTPs in Italy during a certain time. Until now, few Italian data had been available (Gallus S et al. Impact of electronic cigarette and heated tobacco product on conventional smoking: an Italian prospective cohort study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Tob Control*. 2022 Oct 7:tobaccocontrol-2022-057368. doi: 10.1136/tc-2022-057368; Gallus S et al. The

Role of Novel (Tobacco) Products on Tobacco Control in Italy. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2021 Feb 16; 18(4):1895.doi: 10.3390/ijerph18041895; Gallus S et al. Use and Awareness of Heated Tobacco Products in Europe. *J Epidemiol*. 2022 Mar 5; 32(3):139-144. doi: 10.2188/jea.JE20200248; EU. Special Eurobarometer 539. Attitudes of Europeans

towards tobacco and related products (Report Fieldwork. May-June 2023). June 2024.

<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2995>; Mastrobattista L, Mortali C, Solimini R et al. Il rapporto nazionale sul tabagismo 2023. *Tabaccologia* 2023; XXI (2):22-26. <https://doi.org/10.53127/tblg-2023-A011>), and the present study is coming in handy particularly to better interpret some conflicting results of previous observations and understand the magnitude of switching in adult smokers.

Of note, it is providing reassuring information regarding the phenomenon of cigarette substitution with smoke-free products (instead of a gateway to smoking, at least in adults) and on the exclusivity of use (showing that the dual use is a quite contained behavior, at least in Italy).

Due to the amount of data, I could suggest shortening the results section a bit, which can be fully reported in tables and/or figures in a supplementary material section. This would facilitate reading and catching the key data.

Among the limitations of the study, already summarized by the Authors, in my opinion, the most important is the very nature of cross-sectional surveys, which need to be coupled with prospective cohort data to draw final conclusions on the potential cause-effect relationship of what was observed.

One additional caveat concerns the period in which the investigation was conducted: i.e., before the COVID pandemic. The current situation could be different, and I am wondering whether post-lockdown data are available and could be published in the near future.