

Review of: "Text messages to support e-cigarette use for smoking cessation: a tool for researchers"

Christopher Bullen¹

¹ University of Auckland

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This short report has a number of real strengths: first, the idea of using text messages to support vapers trying to quit makes good sense: it fills a gap for people trying to quit when they switch to vaping from smoking cigarettes - generally, no ongoing behavioural support is available to people purchasing vapes from retailers online or in physical stores, to enhance the success of the switch being sustained, even permanent; text messaging alone is an evidence-based cessation method so is a very good idea to try this situation; and it is a very affordable and readily accessible approach that most smokers/vapers can use, assuming they have a mobile phone and cellphone coverage. Second, I loved the idea of gathering the 'raw' messages from vapers and ex-smokers using Twitter. I look forward to reading the more detailed methods paper about how this was done, in particular how informed consent was managed to the satisfaction of ethics reviewers. The principle of co-developing the content at all stages is commendable and should be seen as standard in research in these fields. Third, the use of the COM-B behaviour change framework with its behaviour change techniques specifically for smoking cessation provides theoretical and methodological robustness to the study. The final messages are a mix of encouragement to continue; support for coping with urges to relapse to smoking, and some practical tips for dealing with the vagaries of e-cigarettes -e-liquid spills, coils that need to be replaced, and so on. They make 'sense' - the face validity is good. Is there an intention to take the final set back to a panel of vapers to validate them further? I didn't see included any advice about weaning off vaping: should this be considered for inclusion, even if not mentioned by vapers? What isn't clear in the paper is the scheduling and frequency of the messages: can the end-user choose the number of messages to be sent to them, how often in a day or week, and when they are sent? If so, was this on the basis of advice from ex-smokers/vapers? Giving people the option of selecting when and how often they receive messages may, in theory, increase their self-efficacy and potentially enhance the likelihood of successful quitting smoking.