

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

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The emergence of smoke-free alternatives to cigarettes generates a need for knowledge on their use by smokers who do not want to quit, by physicians to be better prepared when clinically managing such patients. This is the main plus provided by this study, which is making available data from a snapshot of the Italian population, both general and of HTP users.

Even if the study is coming from the industry, I deem that the data are presented in a very balanced way. The method applied is appropriate to the scope of the survey, and the amount of data generated is remarkable, also considering that less is known about the behaviors of smokers who switch to smoke-free products, at least in Italy.

In Italy, limited data are available, and these results could help to implement, explain, and shed light on existing disagreements on this issue, particularly among adult smokers. The results are in line with other (few) assessments done in other countries (particularly in Germany and Japan) and can contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena, which is often neglected by clinical practitioners.

On the research side, the study is providing background information that could be used for designing longitudinal studies looking at the real existence of a health benefit (if any) for those who switch to smoke-free products.

In the meantime, we should at least acknowledge, according to the data shown in the paper, that smokers who autonomously switch do perceive a self-reported improvement in some basic health outcomes at a minimum. At least during the pre-lockdown/Covid period, the data clearly show we are facing a phenomenon of substitution, where smokers switch to non-combustible alternatives.

Of note, the authors themselves are clearly highlighting that smoke-free products are not without risk (cessation is the gold standard to be pursued at any cost) and that if any benefit for health exists in switching to such an alternative, relative to the full risk posed by keeping on smoking, this can be maximized just by their exclusive use, avoiding dual use as much as possible (which already appears very low, at least as far as the sample observed in this study is concerned).

I do not have specific suggestions for improving the paper's readability, which is quite informative and comprehensive. Overall, this is a good paper and should be accepted because it provides new pivotal information for the scientific community in terms of product use and informs HCPs and stakeholders on how the novel product scenario is evolving. Perhaps it would be useful if the authors could report the data on how many people were in the year 1 survey, and then if

this number is different from year 2.

In summary, this paper is a welcome addition to the literature, as it provides clinically useful data for a patient population that many health care practitioners interact with during their day-to-day activity.