

# Review of: "[Commentary] The WHO strategies to reduce tobacco-related deaths are insufficient"

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**Potential competing interests:** October 2, 2023 I read with interest, the excellent commentary by Dr Ramstrom concerning the upcoming COP 10 meeting in Panama. While I agree that we need to do more about combustible cigarette-related death and disease, I offer the following suggestions: 1- There are increasing data as Dr Ramstrom reports that a total switch from combustible cigarettes to the newer non-combustible nicotine strategies is probably a harm reduction therapy. However, dual usage of combustible and non-combustible products must be discouraged. 2- Clearly, the absence of tar and carbon monoxide in these non-combustible products significantly reduces exposure to a myriad of toxic chemicals. 3- While it appears that these newer products represent the lesser of two evils, their availability exposes adolescents and young adults to a new source of nicotine addiction. It has also been well established that the incidence of e-cigarette use (the most widely used worldwide of these newer products) has been significantly increasing over the last few years. 4- E-cigarettes are not totally safe as their aerosol contains reactive aldehydes and other chemicals that have been shown to cause vascular dysfunction (particularly endothelial dysfunction), an initial step in atherosclerosis as well as being proinflammatory and prothrombotic. Moreover, the long term effects of e-cigarette usage on cardiovascular and pulmonary function/adverse events are unknown. Thus, for me, this is the conundrum. Can we encourage a total switch in chronic smokers who are otherwise unable to quit cigarettes to these apparently safer products while discouraging their new usage in susceptible adolescents and young adults? No one should believe that in these latter populations, the initial use of any of these products that promote nicotine addiction and expose the individual to potentially harmful toxins is acceptable. I have no competing interests to declare

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