

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

Basma AbuMahfouz

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

It's a good article overall. I appreciate certain parts being explained well to the reader, including the video stimulus to participants. I also appreciate the following: Positive Aspects:

- 1)Clear Objectives and Context: The article clearly outlines the objective of evaluating comprehension of a reduced-exposure message related to JUUL-brand ENDS. It provides relevant background information, emphasizing the importance of accurate communication to promote public health.
- 2)Methodological Rigor: The study employs a large sample size (12,557 participants) and a randomized experimental design, enhancing the robustness of the findings. The inclusion of various tobacco use groups and the consideration of demographic factors contribute to the study's comprehensiveness.
- 3)Relevance of Research Question: The research question addresses a crucial aspect of public health—how effectively messages about reduced exposure to harmful substances through ENDS are understood. This is particularly relevant given the ongoing debate about the safety of e-cigarettes compared to traditional cigarettes.
- 4)Detailed Methodology: The article provides a detailed description of the study design, participant selection, and outcome measures. This transparency is crucial for the reproducibility and credibility of the research.
- 5)Consideration of Health Literacy: The study accounts for health literacy, recognizing its potential impact on comprehension. This inclusion adds depth to the analysis, acknowledging that different audiences may interpret health messages differently.

I would suggest the following edits/ Areas for Improvement:

- 1)Clarity of Abstract: The abstract could be more succinct and explicitly state the primary findings. Currently, it provides a general overview but doesn't clearly highlight the key results and implications of the study.
- 2)Abstract Language: Some terminology in the abstract may be too technical for a broader audience. Simplifying language while maintaining accuracy can improve accessibility.
- 3)Author Affiliations: The affiliations of the authors, especially those affiliated with Juul Labs, Inc., may raise concerns

about potential conflicts of interest. Transparency about funding sources and potential conflicts would enhance the article's credibility.

4)Introduction Structure: The introduction is comprehensive but could be more focused. Streamlining the content to emphasize the gap in understanding, the importance of the study, and the specific research questions can improve its effectiveness.

5)Message Comprehension Results: The presentation of results could benefit from visual aids, such as charts or graphs, to enhance clarity. Currently, the text-heavy presentation might make it challenging for readers to grasp the key findings quickly.

6)Discussion Section: While the article acknowledges the limitations of the study, the discussion section could delve deeper into potential implications of the findings, suggesting avenues for future research or practical applications.

7)Ethical Considerations: The article briefly mentions ethical approval, but more details on how ethical concerns were addressed, especially considering the controversial nature of e-cigarettes, would strengthen the ethical foundation of the study.

8) In the introduction part, there is a section that says

“These message-testing data come from a large, randomized experiment in which adults with varying tobacco-use histories were randomized to be exposed to either the reduced-exposure message, expressed as part of an advertisement for the ENDS product, or to the same advertisement without reduced-exposure messaging.”
the articles that support this argument should be cited alongside it, as this is a pretty big conclusion to be made.

I hope this review is helpful for improving this article. Please let me know if there is anything else I can help with, and I will be more than happy to do so.

Regards,

Basma AbuMahfouz.