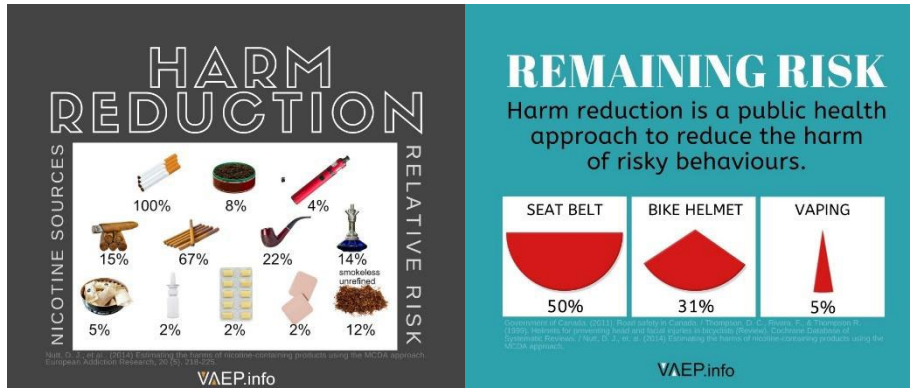


VAEP Key Concepts script 15: What's harm reduction?



Harm reduction is a strategy used in medicine and in social policy to reduce the harm of risky behaviours.(1) Most of us are familiar with and support harm reduction such as seat belts, bike helmets or condoms. Did you know that vaping is also harm reduction?(2) And it's not just a little less harmful than smoking, it's 95% less harmful.(3) So, if smokers switch to vaping or youth take up vaping instead of smoking they are reducing their risk by 95%.

The standard scientific tool for evaluating harm from drug use, in this case nicotine, is the MCDA (multi-criteria decision analysis).(4) This method evaluates harm to the drug user such as death, disease and drug dependence. It also evaluates harm to others such as injury, economic costs and social impact. In 2014, 12 experts compared 12 different nicotine products such as cigarettes, chewing tobacco, pipes, cigars, even nicotine patches and gums using the MCDA. 14 harm criteria were measured. The most harmful nicotine product is cigarettes so they were given the value of 100%. Then the other products were compared to cigarettes. The next highest value for harm was cigarillos at 67%, followed by pipe tobacco at 22%. The value for vaping was 4.4%, a 95.6% reduction in harm.(5)

A couple years later, in 2016, the Royal College of Physicians, in the United Kingdom, released a report called, Nicotine without Smoke.(6) This organization educates physicians, sets clinical standards and improves patient outcomes, particularly in illness prevention.(7) Nicotine without Smoke is 206 pages long, references 130 formal papers and concludes that vaping is less than 5% the risk of smoking.(6)

So, if someone you know can't quit smoking let them know that they have a much safer option. They can't go to healthcare for advice on vaping, unless they live in the UK. So, for professional guidance on switching to vaping, send them to their local vape shop.

Visit VAEP.info for more information on vaping. <https://VAEP.info>

Kellie Ann is wearing our Vintage crew neck purple tee <https://shop.vaep.info/?product=vintage-crew-purple-tee>

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