

# Response to: Clinical trial shows that giving smokers free e-cigarettes creates more dual users than switchers or quitters

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Drs. Hanewinkel and Glantz raise three issues, two we agree upon and one we do not.

We appreciate and agree with the suggestion that future studies of e-cigarette use and cigarette smoking should report on trajectories of use over time, perhaps in a manner in which we did.

Free provision of e-cigarettes within our trial led to dual use. This is a truistic statement. Consider another study in which half the participants get nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and half do not. It would be no surprise that NRT use (with continued smoking) is higher in the former than the latter. It would be newsworthy if this were not true.

Drs. Hanewinkel and Glantz dismiss any potential health benefit of dual use. They cite a meta-analysis of smoking reduction with mixed results. That same review suggested that health benefits depend on the magnitude of reduction. As for dual use, while some e-cigarettes have measurable, often trace quantities of toxicants,<sup>1</sup> evidence of dual use harms as cited within the Pisinger review was deemed “low certainty.” Just as with smoking reduction, any health effects of dual use depend upon the frequency and duration of e-cigarette use and magnitude of smoking reduction.<sup>2</sup> We certainly do not agree that all dual use is equivalent<sup>3</sup> or should be classified as an adverse event.

Our field will benefit from an ongoing, data-driven conversation on dual use.<sup>4</sup> As that conversation

unfolds, we should not dismiss the growing evidence that e-cigarettes facilitate smoking cessation.<sup>5</sup>

## Contributors

MJC drafted an initial reply, edited by both KMC and TTS.

## Declaration of interests

The parent trial was funded by the National Cancer Institute. MJC has entered into discussions to serve as paid expert witness in litigation involving trade disputes involving e-cigarette manufacturers. From the parent trial, e-cigarette product (both device and liquid tanks) were purchased at market cost from NJOY. No free product was given or received. KMC has served as a paid expert witness in litigation filed against cigarette manufacturers. TTS reports no conflicts.

## References

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