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# Educated youth leading use of e-cigarettes, finds study

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MUMBAI: Educated youth are driving the vaping habit in the country more than two years after e-cigarettes were banned here, according to a newly published medical study.

The study, published in the 'Journal of Preventive Medicine', was conducted by the George Institute for Global Health, Delhi, after interviewing more than 800 Indians. "Despite a ban in the country, educated youth are among those who most used e-cigarettes," said a release from the institute.

E-cigarettes are available through online stores and even some local vendors, said a doctor from Mumbai. E-cigarettes essentially contain nicotine, which is a highly addictive substance found in tobacco cigarettes as well.

Dr Pankaj Chaturvedi, a cancer surgeon from Tata Memorial Hospital, Parel, who has worked towards the ban, said, "Nicotine is a highly toxic and lethal chemical."

The 'Journal of Preventive Medicine' interviewed 840 educated young adults and found that 23% had used e-cigarettes. "Only 8% of e-cigarette users reported daily use," said the study. "Vapers sourced e-cigarettes from retail outlets (vape shops, tobacconists) and their social networks (friends, siblings)," it further said. Just under two-thirds of those who were aware of e-cigarettes believed them to be harmful and to contain chemicals. "Among non-users, 31% were curious about using e-cigarettes, and 23% intended to use them in the following year, indicating high levels of susceptibility," said an author of the study.

"Greater education about harms associated with vaping and more intensive monitoring and enforcement could assist in reducing uptake in relatively high-prevalence groups such as educated adults," it added. India, where 65% of the population is under 35 years of age, is one of the few countries that has completely banned the sale of e-cigarettes.