

# Vapers want scientific data for smoking cessation

The Philippine Star · 14 Jun 2018 · B5 · By RAINIER ALLAN RONDA

International advocates of electronic cigarettes as a smoking cessation tool called for the formulation of scientific data and evidencebased regulations of the so-called electronic nicotine delivery systems.

Heneage Mitchell of Hong Kong-based advocacy group Fact Asia Consultants Ltd. said any effort to formulate regulations on vaping or the use of e-cigarettes should consider the findings of scientists and researchers as well as medical societies that admitted vape pens are effective tools for smoking cessation.

“They offer the opportunity to mitigate risk. This product is understood by the scientific community that is independent, not financed by (lobby groups) ... to be 95 to 99 percent less harmful, safer, than a conventional cigarette which is available worldwide,” Mitchell told Manila-based reporters.

Mitchell was one of the resource persons during the 1st Summit on Harm Reduction at the Sulo Riviera Hotel in Quezon City last month.

The summit, organized by The Vapers Philippines, discussed the need for regulation and cooperation among players in the electronic cigarette sector.

Among the academies and medical societies that have issued favorable positions on e-cigarettes are the United States National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicines and the Royal College of Physicians in United Kingdom.

Even the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has come out with an issuance calling for nicotine regulation and the development of less harmful tobacco products.

The FDA advance notice has been published in the Federal Registrar, the daily journal of the US government, and will be open for public comment until June 14 to obtain information for consideration in developing a tobacco product standard to set the maximum nicotine level for cigarettes.

Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling vapor produced by an e-cigarette – a batteryoperated device which vaporizes a flavored liquid made of water, nicotine, propylene glycol, glycerol and flavoring.

Mitchell also stressed that e-cigarettes should not be classified as a tobacco product, which is normally burned. E-cigarettes, he says, are only heated and does not produce harmful tar.

“It’s a very simple device, really. Everything here is already covered by ample regulations,” Mitchell said, citing regulations issued and now enforced in other countries.

Nancy Sutthoff, New Zealand spokesperson for the International Network of Nicotine Consumer Organizations, asked the Filipino vapers to work together, form a network and community of advocates for e-cigarettes.

Standing in their way are medical associations, pharmaceutical companies and the Department of Health, which adopts the World Health Organization's stand refusing to endorse e-cigarettes.

There are also safety concerns after a 38-year-old man in St. Petersburg, Florida died last month due to an explosion in his vape pen that sent two pieces of shrapnel into his cranium.

"Three years ago, New Zealand was basically in the same position as the Philippines in terms of the proposed regulatory framework and legislation on e-cigarettes," says Suthoff, a former smoker who switched to e-cigarettes.

New Zealand is one of few countries where e-cigarettes are accepted and regulated, along with Japan, South Korea, England, Denmark and Canada.