**Media release:**

**Health professionals called upon to learn about and support nicotine vaping**

Health professionals and smokers think nicotine e-cigarettes would be helpful as stop smoking aids, said the authors of a study published in the New Zealand Medical Journal today. Led by Trish Fraser of End Smoking NZ, the study interviewed a small number of general practitioners, nurses and stop smoking service, providers. Sixteen smokers, half of whom were Māori were also interviewed.

“The health professionals admitted that they didn’t know very much about e-cigarettes but they wanted to learn.” Said Fraser. “Some of them had some concerns about nicotine e-cigarettes but said they would still support patients, who chose an e-cigarette for stopping smoking. The support they could offer, however, is currently limited because they don’t know where to buy e-cigarettes or how to use them.”

The smokers interviewed were very interested in nicotine e-cigarettes but also didn’t know where to buy them and which ones contained nicotine. The lack of trustworthy information for both health professionals and smokers, combined with the health professionals’ reluctance to discuss e-cigarettes with their patients was identified as a barrier inhibiting smokers’ switching to less harmful vaping.

“It’s time for health professionals to learn about vaping nicotine in e-cigarettes and to start recommending them as an option for patients wanting to stop smoking.” Said Dr Murray Laugesen, a co-investigator on the study.

The study funded by the Health Research Council and the Ministry of Health funded Tobacco Control Research Tūranga recommends: (1) that Government review personal and population benefits of vaping nicotine and (2) considers making nicotine for use in e-cigarettes legal to purchase in New Zealand. This timely recommendation fits with the Ministry’s call for submissions on legalising the sale of nicotine for e-cigarettes. Submissions close next Monday 12th September. See the Ministry of Health website for details: [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz)

In response to the call for information End Smoking NZ has produced a leaflet on how to ‘Support smokers to switch to vaping’. The leaflet can be accessed at <http://www.endsmoking.org.nz/pulications.html>

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