

Quarterly Webinar
Research on Health Impacts of E-cigarettes & What We Should All Know
Q & A Sheet

Q: What cell type was utilized to conduct toxicity screens?

A: We used HEK-293T.

Q: Can we share this information with the public?

A: We ask not to share this information with the public until the data is published. We will tell Rose (rose@countertools.org) when it is OK to do so (probably 2 months from now).

Q: If PG/VG kills all cells and is cytotoxic, why are we discussing flavors?

A: We found in our screen that PG/VG is toxic by itself. In addition, we found that certain flavors are more toxic than PG/VG and there are toxicity differences among them. By testing flavors we can inform the FDA about the ones that should be taken off the market. We agree that if PG/VG is toxic by itself, this should be addressed as well in health groups.

Q: Is it possible that places that mix their own flavors may be more toxic than the ones that come pre-made?

A: The danger with “self-mixing” is that many flavoring mixtures available for home made e-cigarette liquids have not information regarding ingredients or quantity of specific compounds. In other words, self-mixing would have no information on the type and amount of compounds added. In addition, depending on the vendor and quality of the flavoring compounds, purity could be an issue and contamination with non-flavoring compounds could become an issue.

Q: As public health practitioners, what do you feel our messaging should be based off of your findings?

A: As health practitioners, the message should be that e-cigs show toxicity in the lab, but we need more time to investigate the effects we see today. In addition, we see direct health effects on the respiratory system that are quite different from traditional cigarettes. – Dr. Flori Sassano

A: As public health practitioners, what do you feel our messaging should be based off of your findings? - that is a tough one. I would most certainly be AGAINST any adolescent or youth trying e-cigarettes because they think they are “safer”. E-cigarettes still contain nicotine, which is addictive. In addition, we just do not know all of the short term and long-term health effects. This answer is a bit more complicated for long-term smokers who are using e-cigarettes to quit smoking or as a “safer” alternative. There are published data indicating that long-term smokers with other lung diseases, such as asthma, would benefit from switching to e-cigarettes. However, these studies will need to be verified. In addition, we just do not know whether any specific flavors may induce new adverse health effects in long-term cigarette smokers. The good thing is that there are several ongoing studies examining how switching to e-cigarettes affects overall health in long-term smokers. Hopefully, we will have more definitive data soon. – Dr. Ilona Jaspers