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Study Highlights Impact of COVID-19 on Tobacco and E-cigarette Use and Motivation to Quit

Burlington, VT — A [new study](#) from researchers at the [Vermont Center on Behavior and Health](#) (VCBH) at the University of Vermont (UVM) suggests that, for some, knowledge of COVID-19 is associated with a reduction in cigarette and e-cigarette use, as well as an increase in motivation to quit.

The study, published in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, is among the first to report changes in tobacco use and motivation to quit using cigarettes and e-cigarettes in response to COVID-19.

In this study, VCBH investigators examined data collected from 345 U.S. adults in an online survey conducted in April 2020. The researchers found that a desire to reduce COVID-19 infection risk prompted nearly a quarter of respondents to reduce their cigarette and e-cigarette use, and more than one-third to increase their motivation to quit. Greater perceived risk was associated with increased motivation to quit both products, and more than 20 percent of respondents reported a quit attempt to reduce risk of harm from COVID-19. These data are consistent with recent Vermont quit line ([802 QUILTS](#)) [data](#) showing increases in phone and website registrations in March 2020 compared to March 2019.

“These findings demonstrate that some adults who smoke cigarettes and use e-cigarettes are changing in response to the coronavirus pandemic,” said first author Elias Klemperer, Ph.D., a postdoctoral fellow in the VCBH at UVM. “This is important, because quitting cigarettes is often the most important thing you can do to improve your health. We recommend that anyone who uses tobacco call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to learn about resources to help them quit.”

Additional VCBH studies aimed at gaining a better understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on nicotine, tobacco, and substance use in Vermonters, as well as in broader national samples, are currently underway.

In addition to Klemperer, coauthors on the study include Julia C. West, B.A., VCBH pre-doctoral fellow, Catherine Peasley-Miklus, Ph.D., VCBH project manager, and Andrea C. Villanti, Ph.D., MPH, associate professor of psychiatry.

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