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GF has served as an expert witness or consultant for governments defending their country's policies or regulations in litigation and has served as paid expert consultant to the Ministry of Health of Singapore in reviewing the evidence of plain/standardized packaging. All other authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Electronic Cigarette use among people who smoke and recent quitters in Aotearoa New Zealand: Findings from the ITC NZ (EASE) 2020-21 survey

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BACKGROUND

- Aotearoa New Zealand has a Smokefree Aotearoa goal to reduce smoking prevalence to less than 5% for all peoples by 2025.
- Daily smoking prevalence in 2021/22 was 8%, but was substantially higher among Māori (the Indigenous peoples) (20%) and Pacific peoples (18%).
- Electronic cigarettes (ECs) are widely available in Aotearoa New Zealand and could help people switch to less harmful alternatives or quit nicotine addiction completely.

OBJECTIVE

- Determine patterns of EC use among people who smoke or recently quit smoking in Aotearoa New Zealand and evaluate any differences by age, sex, or ethnicity.

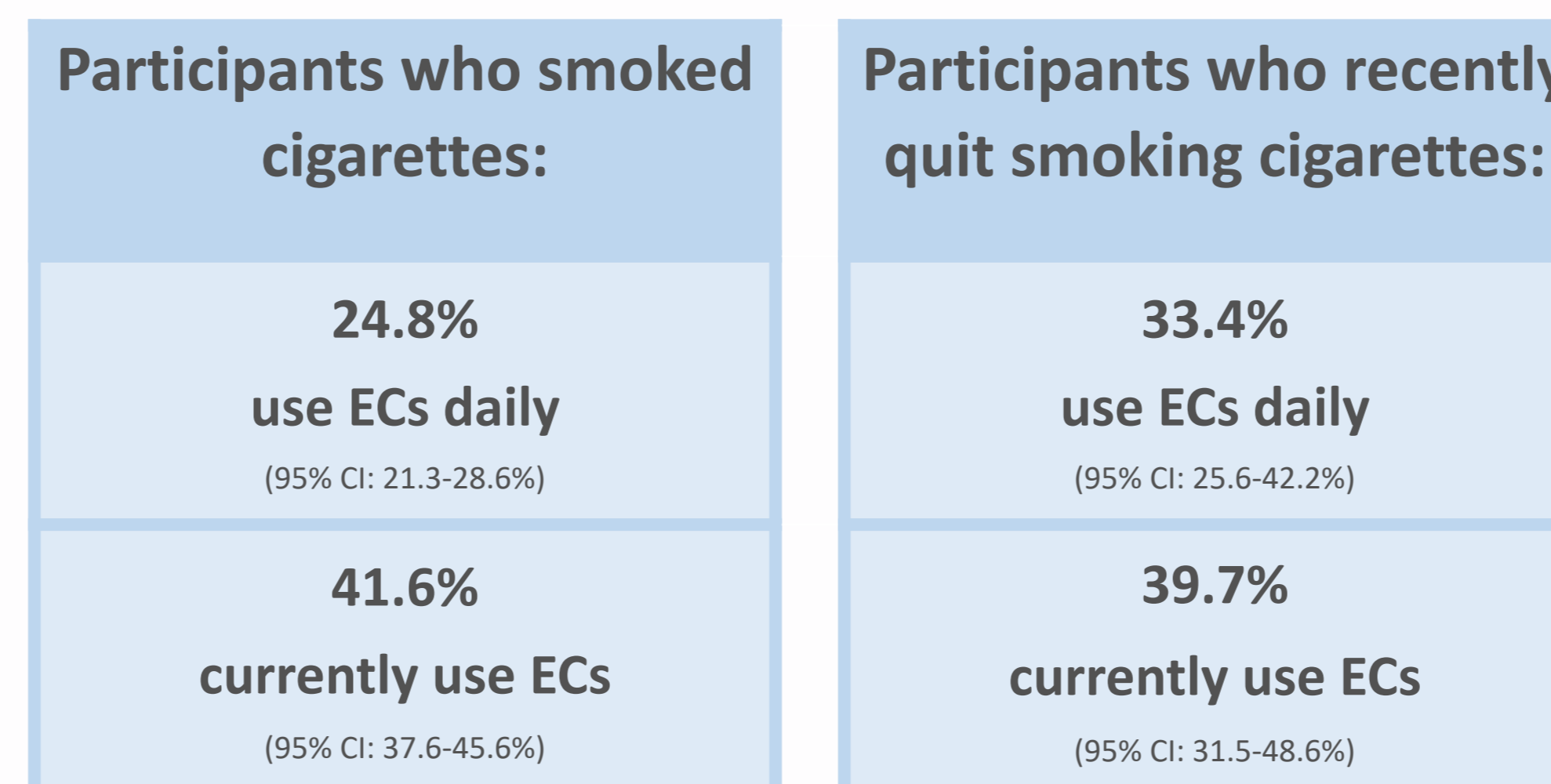
METHODS

- Data were from Wave 3 of the ITC NZ/EASE Survey, conducted online (Oct 2020-Feb 2021).
- Participants were: 700 people who smoked daily, 292 people who smoked less than daily, and 238 people who had recently quit smoking. Participants included 492 Māori and 238 Pacific peoples.
- Estimates were weighted to reflect Aotearoa New Zealand's population of people who currently smoke and recently quit smoking, including weighting for age, sex, and ethnicity.
- "Don't know" and "Refused" responses were excluded.



RESULTS

Use of Electronic Cigarettes (ECs)



Current use is defined as use at least once a month

- Daily EC use among participants who smoked was highest in those aged 18-24 years (37.0% vs 28.8% aged 25-44 and 15.3% aged ≥45) and in participants that did not smoke daily (43.9% vs 17.8% in participants that smoked daily).
- Daily EC use among participants who had recently quit smoking was highest among those aged 25-44 years (42.5% vs 29.4% aged 18-24 and 27.6% aged ≥45), and higher among Māori and Pacific participants (40.0% and 51.6%, respectively, vs 28.4% in non-Māori non-Pacific (NMNP) participants).
- Current EC use among participants who smoked was highest in those aged 18-24 years (58.0% vs 48.6% aged 25-44 and 27.2% aged ≥45) and in males (47.6% vs 34.6% in females).
- Current EC use among participants who had recently quit was higher in those aged 18-24 years and 25-44 years (45.8% and 48.0%, respectively, vs 29.3% aged ≥45). It was also higher in Māori and Pacific participants (52.2% and 54.4% respectively, vs 34.0% in NMNP).

Use of ECs in the most recent quit attempt in participants who had tried to quit smoking in the previous two years



- Use of ECs in the most recent quit attempt was lower in participants aged ≥45 years (44.5% vs 58.5% and 61.8% aged 18-24 and 25-44, respectively) and higher in participants who smoked less than daily compared to participants who smoked daily (69.6% vs 49.5%, respectively).
- For comparison: Nicotine replacement products were used in the latest quit attempt by 46.4% of participants who smoked daily, 32.2% of participants who smoked less than daily, and 19.5% of participants who had quit smoking.

EC availability as a reason to quit smoking

44.4% of participants who smoked or who recently quit smoking reported that EC availability was a reason for thinking about quitting (or having quit) smoking.

CONCLUSIONS

- A high proportion of people who smoked and people who had recently quit smoking were using ECs and reported using them in their most recent or current quit attempt.
- Daily EC use among people who smoked was higher in those ages <25 years and in people who smoked less than daily.
- Daily EC use among people who had recently quit smoking was higher among those aged 25-44 years and among Māori and Pacific peoples.
- These findings suggest ECs are commonly used to help quit smoking in Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly among younger adults, Māori, and Pacific peoples.

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