

SCLC presents:

“Unboxing IQOS: History, risk perceptions, and clinical implications”

on Wednesday, February 10, 2021, at 1:00 pm EST (60 minutes)

Speakers:

- **Pamela Ling, MD, MPH**, Professor of Medicine in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Director, Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, University of California, San Francisco
- **Minji Kim, PHD**, postdoctoral fellow at Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education (CTCRE), University of California, San Francisco

Following the PMTA marketing order, IQOS HeatSticks are subject to a subset of Surgeon General's textual warnings (except the carbon monoxide warning). During the webinar, Minji Kim mentioned that based on this, she expects the tobacco sticks will be subject to the graphic warning labels too. However, after the webinar, she found that the decision may depend on further evaluation. It seems undecided whether IQOS will be subject to the same graphic warning labels as cigarettes, and unclear how or whether the MRTP authorization will affect such decision.

IQOS PMTA marketing order (<https://www.fda.gov/media/124248/download>, p.13) says that "When FDA promulgates a final rule with respect to health warnings for cigarettes, FDA will reevaluate the conditions of marketing with respect to warnings for the products subject to this order".

Q: Are you able to speak more about how reduced exposure does not mean reduced risk? It is difficult to communicate about risk without this further elucidated. I am aware of studies that consider health effects among occasional vs. regular smokers but am not aware of such among users of HTPs or e-cigs.

Q: Is there any research on how the public understands "reduced exposure" vs. "reduced risk"?

A: Please see this study from the University of North Carolina, which found that "reduced exposure" claims lead to perceptions of reduced risks among US adults and adolescents : El-Toukhy S, Baig SA, Jeong M, et al. Impact of Modified Risk Tobacco Product Claims on Beliefs of Us Adults and Adolescents. Tob Control. 2018;27(Suppl 1):s62-s69.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2018-054315>.

Q: Aside from market share, does IQOS have popularity/appeal in Europe and Asia? In addition, might IQOS consider flavors to lure younger customers?

A: In Asia and Russia, IQOS is marketing various fruit/menthol flavored tobacco sticks, which appeals to young people.

Q: Why do you think IQOS is so popular in Japan?

A: Hypothesis 1: Japan does not allow nicotine-containing e-liquid, so there were less competition against nicotine vaping products.

Hypothesis 2: IQOS' claims on "clean" "no smoke" appealed to the cultural values of "order, cleanliness, quality, and respect for others" (compared to cigarettes). For more, see: Hair EC, Bennett M, Sheen E, et al. Examining Perceptions About IQOS Heated Tobacco Product: Consumer Studies in Japan and Switzerland. Tob Control. 2018;27(Suppl 1):s70-s73. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2018-054322>.

Q: To be clear, \$00 buys the "outside" unit only. There then exists the expense of the cigarettes - right?

A: Yes, but many markets have bundling option that provides deep discount for both the device and tobacco sticks. IQOS tobacco sticks are usually similarly priced, if not cheaper, than cigarettes.

Q: You mentioned high cost at around \$100. Is that \$100 for device? What do the sticks cost? What do you suppose is comparable stick number to a pack of cigarettes?

A: IQOS tobacco sticks are usually similarly priced, if not cheaper, than cigarettes. PMI claims one tobacco stick is equivalent to a cigarette, and the machine is programmed to consume one stick for "6 minutes or 14 puffs" according to the user guide.

Q: What exactly is in these heat sticks?

A: The tobacco sticks include processed tobacco leaves; for IQOS, dried tobacco leaves are ground and made into "tobacco sheets" and then cut to be rolled into a stick form.

Q: Do all heated tobacco product use the same or similar technology to heat the tobacco? It's unclear whether these products fall into cigarette, other tobacco product, or vapor product in our state's definition so understanding how exactly this works will be helpful in developing policy language.

A: The core technology is similar across the product in that they use some form of electronic device to add heat to the tobacco leaves, although I cannot say to the mechanical/engineering level.

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Q: Do IQOS come in different strengths or menthol?

A: In the US, PMI is currently marketing regular ones as well as "fresh menthol" and "smooth menthol".

Q: Is there any environmental warning on IQOS packaging regarding toxic waste disposal?

A: I haven't seen much. In the Korean device, there was some language that the electronic device should be "properly disposed" following the local regulation, but not much information.

Q: How do you think the IQOS will affect - either negatively or positively - states' smokefree air laws if it's defined as a heat not burn product?

A: There is a possibility that the tobacco industry is going to use IQOS to push against smokefree law - as they lobbied to allow e-cigarette in "smokefree" regions. Regulation needs to be "tobacco (and cannabis) free" to include all tobacco products, not only combustible cigarettes.

Q: What are the marketing restrictions in the US? In other words, what are the marketing channels and media outlets that can be used to advertise such a product?

A: Same as cigarettes - i.e., allowed on magazines and point-of-sale.

Q: If school health centers are thinking of adding "vaping" questions to their risk assessment screenings, would you recommend adding HTP as well? Or is it too early?

A: I think it is a good idea as an early attempt to capture the awareness and use. Vaping should definitely be on the questionnaire, as well as other currently available tobacco products including heated tobacco products and nicotine pouches.