

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a General Practitioner of 41 years. I have worked as a GP in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for 35 years, and now currently part-time in [REDACTED]. Over these years I have seen the significant harm for patients smoking cigarettes. These illnesses range from lung cancer, severe chronic obstructive lung disease, heart disease, and peripheral vascular disease. These patients have generally smoked most of their lives.

Smoking is addictive and very common in people with mental health illnesses. War veterans commonly smoke. My uncle, a navigator in WW2, was a chain smoker and suffered the consequences with amputations late in his life from peripheral vascular disease. His children, all non-smokers, have asthma associated with passive smoking. It is extremely difficult for patients to cease smoking. Not only the nicotine but the physical comfort of having something in their hands is highly addictive, particularly for very anxious people.

Many of my patients are well aware of the risk of smoking and have tried numerous methods to stop, but unfortunately have returned to smoking. Since vaping commenced I have quite a number of patients who have successfully stopped smoking cigarettes and are now vaping. I firmly believe that despite the "purists" telling us there are no long-term studies as yet about vaping, that there has been significant reduction in adverse lung symptoms for those patients.

If vaping was banned, I definitely believe all these patients would return to cigarette smoking. I would welcome further research into vaping, however believe that people have the right to choose and the nature of some people will always be to take a risk. Vaping has definite advantages over smoking regarding the effect on other people. Passive smoking has proven to be harmful, whereas passive vaping has not.

I believe the argument that vaping will lead to smoking is false. I believe it would prevent smoking. Most kids attempt some form of "smoking" - only some continue. Further research into addictive genes may give us more insight. Alcohol excess, gambling and illicit drug taking are other forms of behaviours that impact heavily on society, yet the efforts to control these problems don't appear to be nearly as rigorous as this "anti-vaping" campaign.

I have never smoked although I have been exposed to several family members who have. I

can personally tell you the family members that have "converted" to vaping have significantly less lung symptoms - i.e. significantly reduced cough and sputum and improved lung capacity.

I firmly believe in legalising vaping, and allowing research to continue regarding the safety of vaping and harm-minimisation related to reduced cigarette smoking. Many countries such as the UK, Germany, and the USA have legalised vaping and we should be following their progressive approach.

Yours faithfully,

**Dr Glenda Smith**