



ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE AND HOOKAH USE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA: RISK INFLUENCES, HEALTH EFFECTS AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Siphesihle Gwambe

Scientist

*South African Medical Research Council, Mental Health,
Alcohol, Substance Use and Tobacco Research Unit*





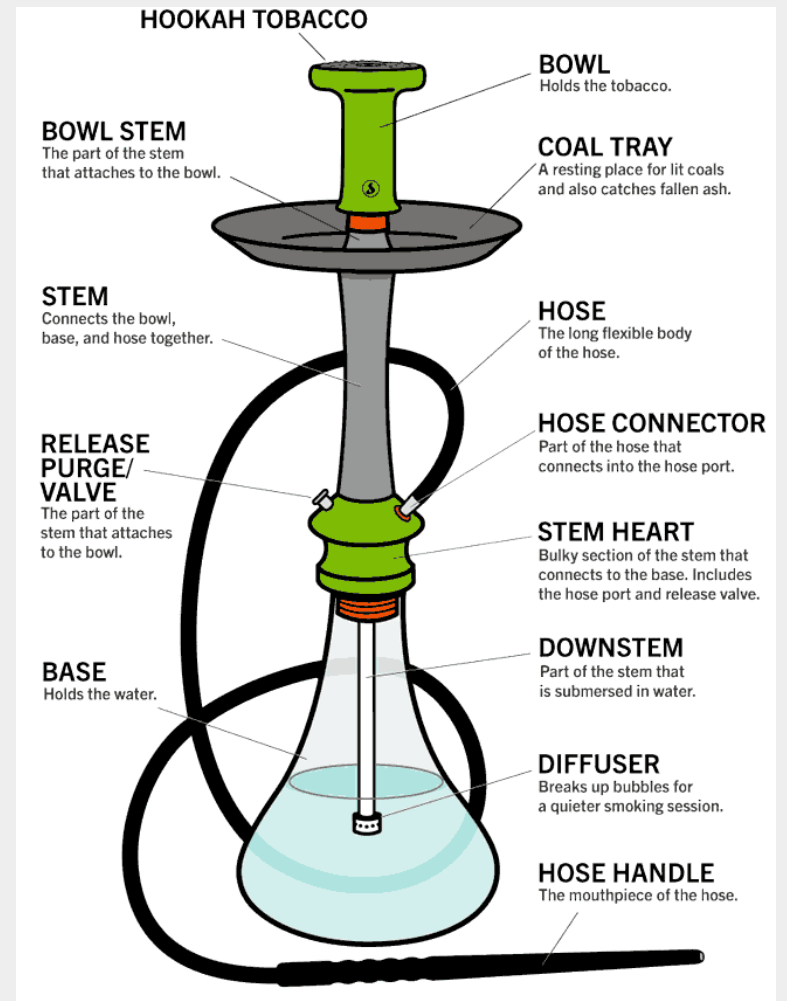
Electronic cigarettes (vapes)

Are devices that are powered by a battery which heats up a liquid (nicotine) into a vapor that can be inhaled



Waterpipe (Hookah/Hubbly Bubbly/Shisha)

- Uses coals to heat tobacco on a device which enables the smoke to pass through a chamber of water (base or vase) before being smoked through a pipe



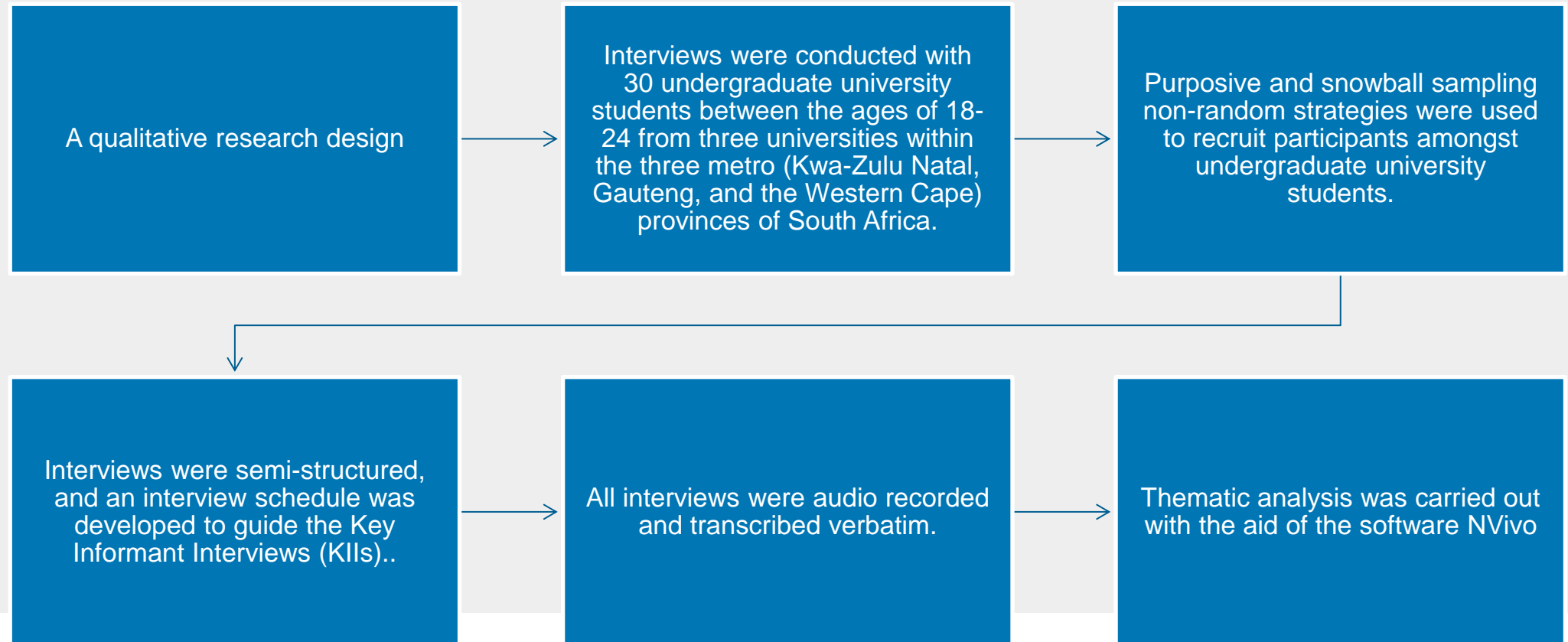


Background

- Electronic cigarettes and waterpipe (hookah/shisha) are becoming increasingly popular particularly amongst the youth and adolescents
- These alternative tobacco products are more popular because of their social appeal, and their perception of having reduced health effects
- The tobacco industry's aggressive marketing efforts have also been implicated for the rising popularity of these products especially among young people.



METHODOLOGY



METHODOLOGY CONT'D

Inclusion Criteria

- Be a registered student in one of the sampled universities, faculties/departments
- Be aged between 18-24 years.
- Consent to participate.
- Currently use either e-cigarette or hookah (or both)

Exclusion Criteria

- Not a registered student in one of the sampled universities or faculties/departments
- Less than 18 years of age and older than 24 years of age
- Did not consent to participate in the study.
- Does not currently use either e-cigarette or hookah (or both)

Sample Demographic Characteristics

(N)	Demographic Characteristics %
	Qualitative
Total no. of participants	N (N=29)
Gender	
Female	18
Male	11
Race	
Black	89,65% (26)
Coloured	3.44% (1)
Indian/Asian	3.44% (1)
White	3.44% (1)
Age	
18-19	13.79% (4)
20-24	86,20% (25)

Theme 1: Risk Factors Influencing Usage of E-cigarettes and Hookah

The risk factors which contributed to the use of e-cigarettes and waterpipe include multiple influences, such as: peer pressure, social norms, marketing tactics, and perceptions of reduced harm compared to traditional tobacco products.

“So, I used to smoke vape every time when im drunk with my friends, so its just an influence of your friends. Cause of your friends actually smoke this thing cause its not a drug, it’s just, it’s just vape yah bra, with...with...Flavors, yah dog!”
(KZN_07)

“According to my perspective, hookah has this reputation of, as compared to other drugs or other substances, it has this key interpretation where people whereby the people who smoke hookah tend to be like clean as compared to people who actually use other substances, uhm, they tend to be clean and tend to, it doesn’t actually have a reputation, so, other people perceive us as just cool boys” (GP_03)

Theme 2: Health Effects Experienced by Participants

- Participants mentioned experiencing health effects (self-reported) such as headaches, respiratory difficulties, fatigue, decreased performance and mental health issues amongst other health effects.

“I think it disturbs your brain and it makes your brain...for me it made, it made my brain slower..and I start imagining things, you know you just imagine things, crazy things....Okay, so there reason why I stopped at some point, I noticed that it made me feel dizzy, you know feel dizzy. I would blackout. Yeah, that’s the only thing that happened” (WC_09_Hookah).

,..I’m just like very tired, so fatigue, yea so I think like those are like the big health side effects or effects of nicotine..during consumption and after... somethings like fatigue basically, I’ll be tired after that... cause I vape like sometimes throughout the day and I will be just tired the whole day.. I just sleep, uhm I become very lazy” (WC_02)

Theme 3: Financial Implications of Usage

For some participants, the cost of purchasing an e-cigarette was described as varying between R400-R700 depending on the amount of the e-liquid, coil and whether it was a first-time purchase.

Participants mentioned that their source of money was mostly bursaries and money they received from their parents which was typically intended for food purchases and other educational needs

For calculations I may say the electronic cigarettes, the one, the vapor one uh it cost, a minimum of vaper cost about R400 just the small one vapor, to add Flavors one flavour cost R100 that maybe we can last for like 3 weeks....." (KZN_01)

"Every when we get NSFAS, we just request from res we go to Shisha Bars and buy flavours, different flavours" (GP_01)

Theme 3: Financial Implications of Usage

- The sources of funds to purchase hookah and e-cigarettes were similar. Students mentioned that their source of money was mostly bursaries such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and money they received from their parents was typically intended for food purchases and other educational needs

*Every when we get NSFAS,
we just request from res we
go to Shisha Bars and buy
flavours, different flavours”
(GP_*

Conclusion and Recommendations

- ❖ Various factors, including peer pressure, social status, social issues, accessibility, media advertisements and marketing, and the emergence of new norms within communities influence the initiation of hookah and e-cigarettes among university students
- ❖ There is an urgent need to enhance the dissemination of information regarding the potential health hazards linked to the use of e-cigarettes and hookah among young adults
- ❖ The easy availability of these tobacco products increases young people's access to them, thereby prompting initiation into tobacco use.

Thank You

- Co-authors
 1. Dr Catherine O.Egbe
 2. Ms Arshima Khan
 3. Ms. Lungile Mavundla
 4. Ms. Ngokwana Rachamose
 5. Ms Philile Makhunga