

衛生署
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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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本署檔號 Our Ref.: (52) in DH-TCO/1-60

9 September 2019

Dear Doctors,

**Possible Cases of Severe Pulmonary Disease Associated with
Use of Electronic Cigarette (e-cigarette) reported in the United States**

We would like to draw your attention to the probable cases of severe pulmonary disease associated with the use of e-cigarettes reported in the United States (US) (please refer to <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/pdfs/mm6836e2-H.pdf>, and also <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/pdfs/mm6836e1-H.pdf>).

As of August 27, 2019, the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the US has discovered 215 possible cases, reported in 25 states, of severe pulmonary disease associated with the use of e-cigarettes. According to the CDC, the clinical features of such pulmonary disease might include nonproductive cough, pleuritic chest pain, and shortness of breath, which appears to occur over several days to several weeks before hospitalization. Systemic signs and symptoms might include tachycardia, fever, chills, and fatigue. Gastrointestinal symptoms, which have preceded respiratory symptoms in some cases, include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Most identified patients have been hospitalized with hypoxemia, which in some cases, has progressed to acute or subacute respiratory failure. All patients have a reported history of e-cigarette use. Most cases have reported a history of using e-cigarette products containing cannabinoids such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), some have reported the use of e-cigarette products containing only nicotine, and others have reported using both. Based on the available information provided by the CDC, the disease is likely caused by unknown chemical exposure. **No consistent e-cigarette product, substance, or additive has been identified in all cases, nor has any one product or substance been conclusively linked to pulmonary disease in patients.**

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While the definitive cause of the reported illness remain uncertain, persons known to be using e-cigarettes should be advised to stop the use. Currently, there is no evidence showing e-cigarettes are effective in helping smokers quit. Smokers who are attempting to quit should use evidence-based smoking cessation treatments such as counselling and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). They may call the Integrated Smoking Cessation Hotline of the Department of Health at 1833 183 for advice and/or referral to the community-based smoking cessation clinics.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Y. Fung', with a small dot at the end.

(Dr FUNG Ying)
for Director of Health