

**Novel tobacco products pose a danger to young people, and industry marketing techniques remain predatory and must be called out, say international respiratory societies.**

On World No Tobacco Day 2024 (31 May), the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS), of which [Pan African Thoracic Society](#) is a founding member, is drawing attention to the dangers that novel tobacco products pose to children and young people, alongside calling out the predatory marketing techniques of the tobacco industry, looking to secure lifetime consumers of their products.

Evidence suggests that novel tobacco products have negative impacts on respiratory health. The emergence and growth of such products raises health concerns for individuals of any age, with some specific concerns identified for the younger population.

Increasing evidence shows that novel tobacco and nicotine products constitute gateways to nicotine addiction and the initiation of smoking among youth. A recent review of 189 studies on vaping and e-cigarettes concluded that non-smoking youths who use e-cigarettes have substantially higher likelihood of starting smoking.

“The brains of children and adolescents are uniquely vulnerable to the effects of nicotine and they face an increased risk of nicotine addiction. The earlier an individual begins smoking, the more likely they are to continue smoking later in life” says, Filippos Filippidis, Chair of the Tobacco Control Committee of the European Respiratory Society.

“Tobacco products are particularly damaging to young people. Lungs continue to develop throughout childhood and adolescence, and therefore are more vulnerable to the negative effects of novel and traditional tobacco products”.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the tobacco industry has stated previously that younger adults are the only source of replacement smokers, noting that high school age children are the base of their business.

The WHO also notes that the tobacco industry spends on average \$23 million a day on marketing, and increasingly use digital and social media platforms to target younger markets. Social media influencers who reach and engage children and adolescents are employed as brand ambassadors and are offered financial incentives to promote tobacco products. One study showed that posts featuring 100 hashtags associated with tobacco companies had been viewed more than 25 billion times.

“With the evidence and dangers that tobacco products pose to our children clear to see, the marketing techniques used to promote such products must be called out and prevented. Appealing flavours, bright colours and advertisements, both direct and indirect, such as product placement in films and social media can be particularly appealing to young people, and they do play a significant role in steering adolescents towards nicotine addiction. They need to be prohibited.”

## Notes to editor

### About the [Forum of International Respiratory Societies](#)

The Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) is an organization comprised of the world's leading international respiratory societies working together to improve lung health globally. The goal of FIRS is to unify and enhance efforts to improve lung health through the combined work of its more than 70,000 members globally.

FIRS comprises the American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST), American Thoracic Society (ATS), the Asian Pacific Society of Respirology (APSR), Asociación Latino Americana De Tórax (ALAT), European Respiratory Society (ERS), International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases (The Union), Pan African Thoracic Society (PATS), the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA), and the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD).

Information referenced in this statement can be found in the publications below:

- [European Respiratory Society statement on novel nicotine and tobacco products, their role in tobacco control and “harm reduction”](#)
- <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/tobacco-industry-tactics-to-attract-younger-generations>
- <https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/factsheets/0114.pdf>

