



## ***THE MALAYSIAN THORACIC SOCIETY***

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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
25 August 2015

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### **PRESS STATEMENT: SALES OF ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES**

25 August 2015, Kuala Lumpur - Earlier this month, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam stated that vaping, i.e. the use of electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS), should be temporarily stopped until findings on the risks are announced in two months' time. This was soon followed by a declaration by the National Fatwa Council that vaping is *haram*, given its detrimental effects on human health.

The Malaysian Thoracic Society (MTS), as representative of doctors and allied healthcare staff with an interest in respiratory medicine, welcome the ongoing scrutiny into the use of ENDS in Malaysia. This relatively new piece of technology has disrupted the tobacco industry as its use has increased exponentially since its introduction ten years ago.

The MTS believes that there may be a role for ENDS, more popularly known as electronic cigarettes, as a form of harm reduction for active smokers. Preliminary studies have shown a positive effect in helping patients quit smoking. However, there is a lack of data on short and long term effects of ENDS use, making it difficult for doctors to recommend ENDS as a smoking cessation tool at this point in time.

One concern about ENDS is the lack of content standardisation. 'The sheer variety of ENDS 'juice' is worrying,' said Professor Roslina Manap, President of the MTS. "Earlier this year the first product standards for ENDS were published by the British Standards Institute and similar standards have been produced in France. This is a move that should be emulated in Malaysia to ensure that research is conducted accurately'.

Although research may provide evidence for the use of ENDS as a medical tool in patients, the MTS is against the sales of ENDS as a consumer product given public health concerns. Besides the potential side effects of inhaling material such as formaldehyde, the MTS is concerned about the manner in which ENDS is marketed to consumers, particularly our youth. A study published last week in the Journal of the American Medical Association showed that school children who vape are more likely to use cigarettes in the future. There is a legitimate concern that the public use of ENDS can lead to the reversal of decades of progress in the war against nicotine use.

The MTS therefore calls for a total ban on retail sales of ENDS whilst keeping an open mind regarding its potential role as a medical aid in helping smokers quit. We congratulate the Ministry of Health on its increasing efforts to helping Malaysians quit smoking and urge the Ministry to continue in its endeavours to increase access to quit smoking services.

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