

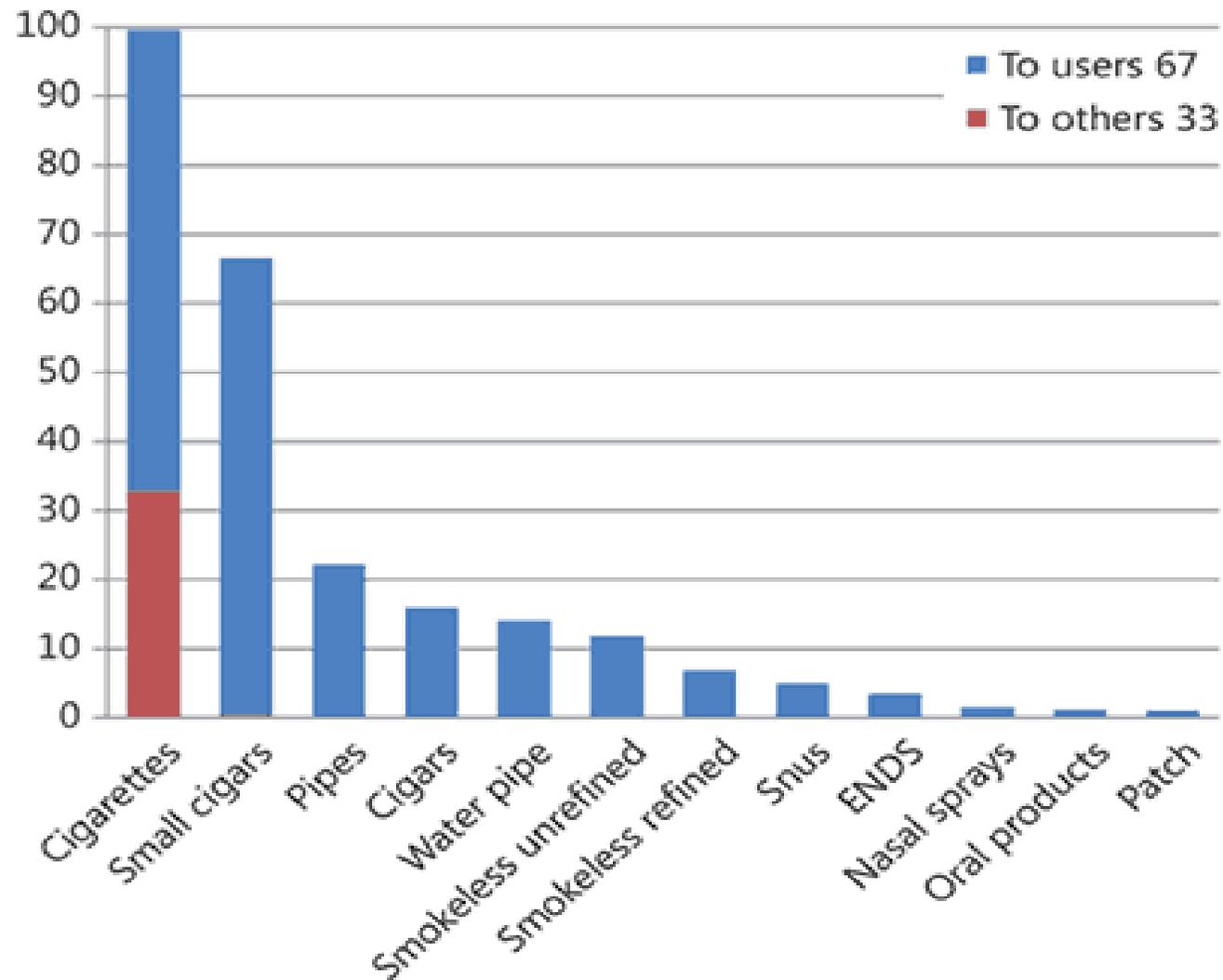
# E-cigarettes represent an opportunity for tobacco control, not a barrier

- Pr Jean-François ETTER, PhD
- IARC – Lyon
- Thursday, 9 June 2016, 12:00-12:45
- Conflicts of interest : none

## Continuum of risk

Nicotine products: Overall scores of harm to users and harm to others

Nutt et al. Eur Addict Res 2014;20:218-225



# Combustion : the main problem

- The **combustion** of tobacco, not tobacco or nicotine by themselves, is responsible for a global disaster
- Any other form of tobacco is less toxic than combustible products
- « People smoke for nicotine by die from the tar »  
(Michael Russell)

# Use by non-smokers: “gateway” hypothesis not proven

- **There is no scientific evidence that e-cigs are a gateway to smoking**
- True: experimentation in young non-smokers is increasing
- Daily use of e-cigarettes in never smokers is extremely rare
- *Caveat:* past 30-day use is not equivalent to regular use or addiction
- Even showing that there is daily use in non-smokers would not be sufficient
- Sophisticated epidemiologic studies are needed to demonstrate gateway effects
- No such study has been published to this date
- Smoking prevalence in teens decreases in countries where vaping prevalence is high

# Renormalization: a rhetorical argument

- **There is no scientific evidence that e-cigs are ‘renormalizing’ smoking**
- This argument is not logical, purely rhetorical
- Vaping normalizes vaping, not smoking
- E-cigs are used largely by smokers, to quit or reduce smoking
- Dual use: no longitudinal data
- Smoking prevalence decreases in countries with high vaping prevalence

# Vaping in public places: negotiate

- Substantially less toxic to bystanders than second-hand smoke, if at all
- No proof that vaping reduces incentives for quitting, rhetorical argument
- Vaping normalizes vaping, not smoking
- Ban vaping indoors?  
Not everywhere, exceptions after negotiation, e.g. vape shops, bars

# Facing the tobacco industry: courage needed

- Investments = billions
- Tobacco industry plans to register reduced-risk products
- Their interest + duty: maximize profit, not tobacco sales
- Vaporizers = section of the nicotine market that can bring profit
- Reputational benefit, as they contribute to the solution
  
- How to react ?
- The enemy is combustion, not the manufacturers of reduced-risk products
- Change in attitudes is required, without being naïve
- Requires courage and new ideas

# How to react ?

- WHO – FCTC - COP6 recommendation:
- “protect tobacco-control activities from all commercial and other vested interests related to ENDS, including interests of the tobacco industry”
- Real world:
- Acknowledge that vaporizers and manufacturers of vaporizers contribute to reducing the use of combustion
- Manufacturers, in particular Big Tobacco, are VERY influential
- WHO – COP should face this reality with courage and new ideas, not bury their head in the sand

# Regulation

- WHO – COP6: “Prevent unproven health claims”
- FDA prohibits claims that e-cigs are less toxic than cigarettes
- FDA prohibits to tell the truth
  
- Ban flavors? (to “protect minors”)  
Damageable, will reduce attractiveness, fewer smokers will switch  
No proof that minors are attracted by the flavors specifically
  
- WHO - FCTC - COP6
- “Invites Parties to consider **prohibiting** or regulating ENDS...”
- “Urges Parties to consider **banning** or restricting advertising, promotion...”

# Retention of information / disinformation

Kozlowski, Swenor. Int J Drug Policy 2016

- FDA prohibits to say that risk of e-cig < risk of combustible cigarettes
- Advertising bans
- TPD: bans all communications (art 20.5.d), not just advertising
- TPD: 'This product contains nicotine which is a highly addictive substance'
  
- Is it justified to knowingly misinform for moral reasons or to protect?
- Cases where withholding information is justified are limited
- Must provide proof that the measure is proportionate and effective, dismisses imminent danger
  
- Contrary to the principles of autonomy, health literacy, individual rights
- Prevents consumers from making rational choices
- It is better to inform on the comparative risks of different products

# Barriers to effective tobacco control

- EU : Tobacco Products Directive art. 20
- USA : FDA regulation
- Several of the WHO - FCTC - COP6 recommendations on e-cigarettes (2014)
- These regulation protect combustible products, kill competing products
  
- Proponents of prohibitions / excessive regulations:
  - Should prove that these measures are effective
  - Should assess and acknowledge the negative effects of excessive regulation
  - Should be held accountable for excess deaths due to less switching
  
- Vaporizers, e-cigarettes have a huge potential to reduce tobacco-related deaths
- We need appropriate, proportionate regulation
- FCTC includes harm reduction : art 1(d)
  
- WHO, COP7 (Nov 2016) should reconsider their position on vaporizers, to gain leadership, credibility and authority on this matter