# Concerns Mount Over Online Vape Promotions Fueling Youth Vaping Epidemic



Campaigners have raised concerns that online promotion of vaping products may counteract efforts to reduce youth vaping through increased taxation. Recent research indicates that teenagers who spend significant time on social media platforms, such as TikTok and Instagram, are more likely to start vaping. Despite planned tax increases set for 2026 intended to make vaping liquids less affordable, online promotions continue to target young audiences.

A study published in the journal "Thorax" surveyed 10,808 individuals aged 10 to 25 in the UK. The findings revealed that extensive social media use correlates with a higher likelihood of both vaping and smoking. Specifically, teens spending more than seven hours daily on social media were almost four times more likely to vape and eight times more likely to smoke cigarettes compared to non-users.

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) deputy chief executive Hazel Cheeseman highlighted that nearly one in three teenagers report being exposed to vape promotions online, with TikTok being notably prevalent. The study's results underscore that social media may significantly influence youth behaviors through direct advertising and endorsements by paid influencers.

ASH's chief executive Deborah Arnott emphasized the need for a comprehensive regulatory approach, combining price hikes with robust regulations to effectively reduce youth vaping. The concerns come amidst increasing evidence that vape companies exploit social media to market their products to minors.

Additionally, data from an annual survey by Action on Smoking and Health found sustained high levels of teen exposure to vape marketing, both online and in retail environments. This survey indicated that 7.6% of children ages 11 to 17 currently vape, a significant increase from previous years.

Medical experts caution against the unknown long-term health effects of vaping, noting potential risks such as lung disease and dental issues. NHS figures indicate a rise in hospital admissions due to vaping-related disorders among children, with 40 cases reported last year.

The study and expert insights reflect a complex landscape where social media's pervasive influence may undermine public health initiatives aimed at curbing youth vaping.