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ABSTRACTS OF ORAL & POSTER PRESENTATIONS



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Accessibility and availability of e-cigarettes and other nicotine products through online platforms in Sri Lanka

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Background: In the context of tobacco losing its popularity, product innovation is the newest industry strategy to increase their profits by maintaining nicotine addiction. The 'Prohibited Tobacco Products Regulations 2016' prohibits manufacture, importation, sale or offering to sale of e-cigarettes containing tobacco in Sri Lanka.

Aims: To assess the accessibility and availability of e-cigarettes and other nicotine products through online platforms in Sri Lanka

Methods: A descriptive study was conducted through social media and online platforms in January 2026. A systematic keyword search identified the platforms. The product availability, their price, purchasing mechanisms and marketing related attributes were analysed.

Results: A total of 213 online platforms selling e-cigarettes and other nicotine products were identified: Facebook (n=108; 50.7%) and Instagram (n=57; 26.8%) were the commonest platforms. The majority (n=150; 70.4%) mentioned either "vape" or synonyms in their names. Forty-three (20.2%) contained age restrictions. The range of products comprised disposable vapes (n=210; 98.6%), vaping liquids (n=159; 74.6%), devices (n=154; 72.3%), vaping accessories (n=79; 37.1%), cartridges (n=110; 51.6%) and other nicotine products (n=34; 15.9%) including snus, nicotine pouches and flavoured variants. Prices started from LKR 2200. The payment methods allowed bank transfers (n=213; 100%), cash-on-delivery (n=212; 99.5%), instalments (n=1; 0.5%) and cryptocurrency (n=4; 2%). Commonest delivery methods were couriership (n=213; 100%) and Pick Me Flash (n=26; 12.2%). Product promotions, sales promotion and promoting use were commonly observed.

Conclusions: E-cigarettes and other nicotine products are widely available and easily accessible even for minors via online platforms in Sri Lanka. The current regulations should be expanded to combat nicotine addiction and enforcement of regulations should be strengthened.

Key words: E-cigarettes, Online platforms, Nicotine products

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