

ABSTRACT

Background: As the use of e-cigarettes grows in the Czech Republic, so does the range of new products and sales channels with different marketing strategies to attract customers. A strong sales channel for disposable e-cigarettes is e-shops. They use different marketing strategies to attract customers. Internet sales are not sufficiently regulated in the tobacco and nicotine sector in the Czech Republic. Sellers can therefore also target minors and non-smokers.

Aims: The aim of the study is to map and describe the forms of advertising and offering of disposable electronic cigarettes in the environment of selected Czech e-shops.

Methods: Czech e-shops selling disposable e-cigarettes were identified using a desk search method. These e-shops were analysed by examining the visual and textual elements of the marketing communication used (e.g. images, banners, texts, etc.), marketing claims promoting the benefits of e-cigarettes, the use of sales promotion tools, and whether these e-shops target vulnerable groups (children, adolescents and non-smokers) with promotion and advertising techniques. On the basis of the established criteria, 13 domestic e-shops were identified and the predetermined elements of advertising and promotion were mapped and analysed. The data was recorded in the form of screenshots (printscreen).

Results: The main findings suggest that a wide range of disposable e-cigarettes from different brands, mainly Elf bar, are available on the Czech market, with many different flavours such as tobacco, fruit, dessert, beverage and cool. E-shops use marketing strategies to appeal to a diverse customer base, including youth, although most e-shops have mechanisms to control age at purchase. E-shops also presented claims highlighting health benefits such as reduced harmfulness, absence of harmful substances and the possibility of using e-cigarettes for smoking cessation. In addition, they offer various sales promotion techniques such as customer registration, discounts, loyalty programs and others.

Conclusion: The study identified a wide range of disposable e-cigarettes on the Czech market and a variety of marketing strategies of e-shops. E-shops frame the presentation of e-cigarettes as a modern, attractive and healthier alternative to tobacco products through different marketing strategies and encourage customers to buy through sales promotion techniques. They are presented as a widely available product with a variety of brands and flavours. The presentation is also based on promotion through social media. Recommendations for further research may include the development of a more detailed analysis of e shop marketing strategies, examination of the impact of e-cigarette marketing on children and adolescents' perceptions of risk and use of e-cigarettes, or research on effective regulation of online sales of e-cigarettes.

Keywords: disposable electronic cigarettes, e-cigarettes, nicotine, e-shop, advertising