J Periodontal Implant Sci. 2018 Aug;48(4):201
https://doi.org/10.5051/jpis.2018.48.4.201
pISSN 2093-2278·eISSN 2093-2286

JPIS
Journal of Periodontal & Implant Science

Editorial

Heat-not-burn cigarettes heat up controversy

Tae-Il Kim

Department of Periodontology, Seoul National University School of Dentistry, Seoul, Korea

Received: Aug 31, 2018
Accepted: Aug 31, 2018

***Correspondence:**
Tae-Il Kim (Editor-in-Chief)
Department of Periodontology, Seoul National University School of Dentistry, 101 Daehak-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul 03080, Korea.
E-mail: periopf@snu.ac.kr
Tel: +82-2-2072-2642
Fax: +82-2-744-1349

ORCID iDs
Tae-Il Kim
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4087-8021

Korean Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (KMFDS) has recently conducted an 11-month-long investigation on heat-not-burn cigarettes which manufacturers often advertise as a less harmful alternative to combustible cigarettes. On June 7th, the results were announced and surprisingly, heat-not-burn cigarettes were found to produce harmful substances related to cancer and more tar compared to the combustible cigarettes.

Based on these data reported by KMFDS, heat-not-burn cigarettes do not seem as safe as the companies claim them to be, yet this argument has not been acknowledged by the manufacturers. Instead, they have been rebutting it by stating that the amount of tar in the cigarettes alone can not be used to determine which types of cigarettes are less harmful to consumers. British American Tobacco, one of the heat-not-burn product manufacturers, commented that there is no way to define every substance in the vaper or smoke, which explains why World Health Organization designated specific ones to be the most harmful as a guide to judge the health effect of certain cigarettes. Another manufacturer, Philip Morris International, added that their own recent study showing heat-not-burn cigarettes may reduce the possibility of lung cancer was presented at a news conference on Aug 30th in Seoul, Korea.

Unfortunately, this discrepancy in results from testing the safety of heat-not-burn cigarettes has caused a major confusion in many consumers, making some of them go back to combustible cigarettes. At this point, we know the report from Food and Drug Administration of United States of America that potentially toxic substances are in significantly lower levels in electronic cigarettes compared to those in conventional cigarettes. There is conclusive evidence supporting that completely switching to electronic cigarette reduces users' exposure to many chemicals and carcinogens that are in conventional cigarettes.

Taking all things into consideration, further investigations are highly required to conclude whether heat-not-burn cigarettes will be a safe alternative to combustible ones. We will stage a hearty welcome for credible studies on electronic cigarettes from periodontal viewpoint which ensures life and health of mankind.