

CARIBBEAN PUBLIC HEALTH LAW FORUM

Newsletter

COVER STORY

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE HCC REPORT ON VAPING AMONG YOUTH

A SUMMARY BY KESAUNDRAL ALVES



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As far as trends go, vaping has found a home with teens and adolescents. Touted as less harmful than traditional smoking, many young people have gravitated towards the use of electronic nicotine and non-nicotine delivery systems (ENDS/ENNDS) as influencers and celebrities alike continue to promote the trend on various social media platforms.

Yet, vaping is not entirely harmless and most vapes or e-cigarettes still contain nicotine, the addictive drug found in cigarettes. The alarming increase in vaping among the region's youth threatens the progress made in relation to tobacco control. Recognising this, the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC), through the support of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), has produced a report "Vaping Among Adolescents and Youth in The Caribbean: Situation, Policy Responses, and Recommended Actions" that analyses:

1

The situation regarding ENDS/ENNDS use among adolescents and youth in the Caribbean

2

Policy responses to address this emerging challenge across the region

3

Emerging global guidance and best practices

The report was launched at a webinar in recognition of World No Tobacco Day 2023 and outlines various approaches to tackle the use and harms of ENDS/ENNDS among Caribbean adolescents and youth. These take into account the obligation of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member States which are parties to the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)¹ to implement effective measures to prevent and control tobacco use and nicotine addiction.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

- The need for legislative action to ban or regulate the sale and use of ENDS/ENNDS
- Application of WHO MPOWER measures to ENDS/ENNDS
- Fiscal measures, including taxes on ENDS/ENNDS
- Research on the use of ENDS/ENNDS among youth

The report calls for the legislative agenda to enact and/or update, and enforce legislation, policies, and regulations to include the use of these devices as well as conventional methods of tobacco/nicotine use in alignment with the WHO FCTC and Decisions from the Conference of the Parties. Consideration should also be given to HCC case studies done in 2022 on the implementation of the WHO FCTC in Antigua and Barbuda and in Saint Lucia.

It also strongly recommends that in all respects, CARICOM governments fully implement WHO FCTC Article 5.3, by ensuring the development and implementation of policies to identify, prevent, mitigate, and manage conflict of interest and industry interference related to the use of ENDS/ENNDS, including through prohibiting manufacturers, distributors, and retailers from participating in policymaking.

The newly released report provides policymakers and key stakeholders with valuable insights including regional youth vaping data, policy responses and evidence-based recommendations to prevent and reduce vaping among young people.



VAPING AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN THE CARIBBEAN:

SITUATION, POLICY RESPONSES, AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

REPORT | JUNE 2023

To download a copy of the report, please click or copy the following link into your browser:

<https://www.healthycaribbean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Vaping-Among-Adolescents-and-Youth-in-the-Caribbean-Situation-Policy-Responses-and-Recommended-Actions-HCC-June-2023-1.pdf>

1 All CARICOM member states with the exception of Haiti are parties to the WHO FCTC. Its guidelines provide the foundation for countries to implement and manage tobacco control.

2 In line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), WHO introduced the MPOWER measures in 2008. MPOWER are a set of six cost-effective and high impact measures that help countries reduce demand for tobacco. These measures include: Monitoring tobacco use and prevention policies • Protecting people from tobacco smoke • Offering help to quit tobacco use • Warning about the dangers of tobacco • Enforcing bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship • Raising taxes on tobacco.

CLEARING THE AIR WEBINAR

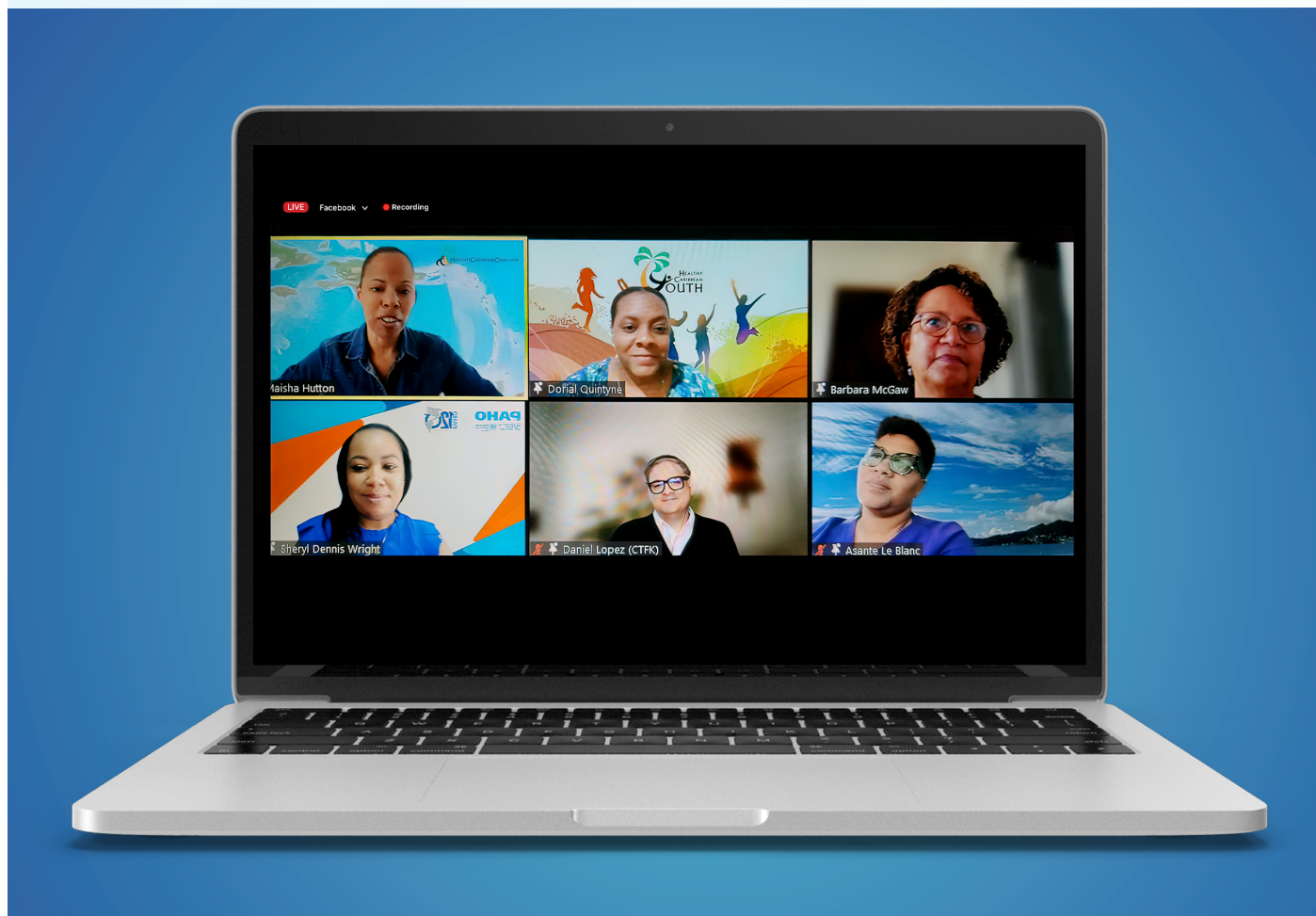
“We need to protect our youth,” A passionate appeal from Tobacco Control Policy Advisor for the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) and the Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control (JCTC) Mrs. Barbara McGaw.

Speaking at the webinar to launch the HCC’s new report on measures to tackle youth vaping in the Caribbean (see cover story), Mrs. McGaw’s call to action addressed concerns surrounding the prevalence of vaping among adolescents in the Caribbean region. Themed “Clearing the Air - Vaping and Youth in the Caribbean,” panellists emphasised the urgency of taking action to combat youth vaping as the HCC’s report highlighted that among individuals aged 13 to 15 years in the 35 PAHO Member States, the highest prevalence of current tobacco use (25.3%) was reported in the Caribbean, noting that ENDS/ENNDS use is also widespread and on the increase in the region.

Ms. Dorial Quintyne, a Healthy Caribbean Youth (HCY) Member and Youth Tobacco Control Advocate drew attention to the targeted marketing strategies employed by the tobacco and vaping industry. She stressed the “urgent need for comprehensive regulation, addressing aggressive marketing tactics, social media influence, and gaps in the regulation that contribute to the accessibility and the attractiveness of vaping.”

The webinar also showcased the “Take a Breath - Can’t Fool Me” campaign spearheaded by the Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society (TTCS) with support from the Scotiabank Foundation, which aims to raise awareness about the dangers of smoking and vaping among youth. Dr. Asante LeBlanc, President of the TTCS, underscored the campaign’s objectives of empowering young people to make informed decisions, supporting their efforts to quit smoking and vaping, and advocating for stronger regulations on smoking and vaping products.

Please click or copy the following link into your browser for the the recording of this webinar and accompanying report:
<https://www.healthycaribbean.org/vaping-among-adolescents-and-youth-in-the-caribbean/>



SCIENCE BEHIND THE POLICY:

EFFECTS OF FRONT-OF-PACKAGE NUTRITION LABELLING SYSTEMS ON UNDERSTANDING AND PURCHASE INTENTION IN JAMAICA: RESULTS FROM A MULTI-ARM RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL

VANESSA WHITE-BARROW • FABIO S GOMES • SHEERIN EYRE
GASTON ARES • AUDREY MORRIS • DEONNE CAINES • DAVID FINLAY

Do front-of-package nutrition labelling systems impact understanding and purchase intention in Jamaica?

To assess the effects of three different front-of-package labelling (FOPL) schemes on objective understanding and the intention to purchase products, we set up a multi-arm parallel-group randomised trial in supermarkets in Jamaica.

Adult supermarket shoppers in Jamaica aged 18 years old or older, except for those who were visually impaired or unable to give informed consent, were included in the study.

Participants were randomly allocated to one of the three intervention groups or the control group. They were exposed to two-dimensional images of 12 mock-up products presented in a random and balanced order. Participants assigned to the intervention groups were exposed to one FOPL scheme: black octagonal warning labels (OWL), magnifying glass high-in single icon (MGG) or traffic-light labelling (TFL). The control group was exposed to the nutrition facts upfront.

THE OUTCOME MEASURES

- Correctly understanding nutritional information (correctly selecting the least harmful option, correctly identifying sugars, sodium and/or saturated fats found to be in excess)
- Choosing to purchase the least harmful option (purchase intention), more often.

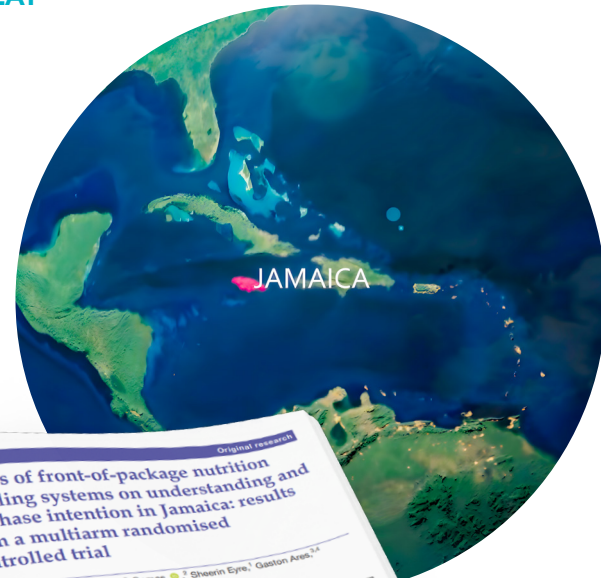
RESULTS

Compared with the control group, the odds for correctly selecting the least harmful option more often were 107% higher in the OWL group, whereas the MGG and the TFL were ineffective in improving such odds. OWL also resulted in the highest odds for correctly identifying a product with excessive amounts of sugars, sodium and/or saturated fats and for deciding to purchase the least harmful option or none of the options.

CONCLUSIONS

Octagonal warning labels performed best at improving the ability of adult shoppers in Jamaica to understand the nutrition information and encouraging them to purchase the least harmful option more often.

For full text of the article, please click or copy the following link into your browser:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37024255/>



EXPLORING WAYS TO RESPOND TO RISING OBESITY AND DIABETES IN THE CARIBBEAN USING A SYSTEM DYNAMICS MODEL

LEONOR GUARIGUATA • LEANDRO GARCIA • NATASHA SOBERS • TREVOR S FERGUSON
JAMES WOODCOCK • T ALAFIA SAMUELS • CORNELIA GUELL • NIGEL UNWIN

Diabetes and obesity present a high and increasing burden of disease in the Caribbean and have failed to respond to prevention policies and interventions.

These conditions are the result of a complex system of drivers and determinants that can make it difficult to predict the impact of interventions. In partnership with stakeholders, we developed a system dynamics simulation model to map the system driving diabetes and obesity prevalence in the Caribbean using Jamaica as a test case.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

- To use the model to assess the magnitude of changes necessary in physical activity and dietary intake to achieve global targets set by the WHO Global Action Plan
- To test scenarios for interventions to reduce the burden of diabetes and obesity.

RESULTS

Continuing current trends in diet, physical activity, and demographics, the model predicts diabetes in Jamaican adults (20+ years) to rise from 12% in 2018 to 15.4% in 2030 and 20.9% by 2050. For obesity, it predicts prevalence to rise from 28.6% in 2018 to 32.1% by 2030 and 39.2% by 2050.

The magnitude of changes necessary to achieve the global targets set by the WHO is so great that it has been deemed unachievable. However, a combination of measures both upstream (including reducing the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and ultra-processed foods, increasing fruit and vegetable intake, and increasing moderate-to-vigorous activity) at the population level, and downstream (targeting people at high risk and with diabetes) can significantly reduce the future burden of diabetes and obesity in the region.

No single intervention reduces the prevalence of these conditions as much as a combination of interventions. Thus, the findings of this model strongly support adopting a sustained and coordinated approach across various sectors to synergistically maximise the benefits of interventions.

For more information, please click or copy the following link into your browser:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36962372/>



MEMBER FEATURES



DR. GLORIA GIRALDO

Advisor, NCDs and Mental Health, PAHO/WHO Office of Subregional Programme Coordination, Caribbean, Steering Committee Member, Secretariat

I co-lead the execution of the functions of the PAHO/WHO Subregional Programme Office on the Steering Committee as our team continues to provide technical cooperation to consolidate the functioning of the Forum.

Vision for the Forum: To work and support Caribbean institutions, including civil society organisations, to consolidate the Forum as an active and dynamic knowledge exchange platform that will strategically utilise the law to develop and strengthen public health policies that allow and empower citizens of the Caribbean to achieve health-supportive environments. The Forum has the potential to become a functional model of public health policy advancement for the Region of the Americas and the world.



DR. SHANA M. CYR-PHILBERT

Senior Medical Officer, Non-Communicable Diseases, Ministry of Health, Saint Lucia, Plenary Chair (2023-2025) and Member of the Steering Committee

Having practised clinical medicine for almost two decades and having worked in public health at a ministry level, I have come to appreciate the great impact that public health policies have on both the prevention and control of diseases, particularly chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Vision for the Forum: Given that the Forum integrates law, advocacy and medicine, I hope that it will bring the desired changes in public health by raising awareness of NCDs and their risk factors, improving prevention and control through collaborative efforts of the various stakeholders who are part of the Forum, and through sound decision-making and the promotion of health in all policies.



SHYRA WATTLEY

Legal Counsel, Nevis Island Administration. Plenary Vice Chair (2023-2025)

Apart from supporting the Chair in the plenary sessions, my role involves active participation in the Working Groups, which allows me to make valuable contributions to the Forum, drawing from my background in law and otherwise, to bring forth positive change in Caribbean Public Health, particularly as it relates to policies and legislation.

Vision for the Forum: For the year ahead, it will serve as machinery for change in the Caribbean Public Health space by fostering working relationships between professionals across the Caribbean who share similar goals. I also envision the Forum implementing the necessary initiatives to impact Caribbean Public Health policies and laws.



PIERRE COOKE JNR

Forum Member

As a dynamic law student, technical advisor to the HCC, advisor to the United Nations, Barbados and Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, and global leader in the fight against malnutrition, I am determined to transform the Caribbean Public Health Forum into a catalyst for change.

Vision for the Forum: I envision the forum as a platform where governments go beyond talk and make dedicated commitments to health care reform and given my expertise and passion, I eagerly lend my voice to drive this transformative process.



KIMBERLEY BENJAMIN

Attorney-at-Law, Forum Member

As a member of the Forum, I participate in meetings of the Plenary Group as well as the Working Groups on Nutrition/Food Policy and Tobacco Control. In addition, I have drafted and shared various papers with the Forum on topics of interest, such as the use of Caribbean Community Law to advance towards a smoke-free Caribbean, among others.

Vision for the Forum: I envisage an active network of individuals who are willing to share information and strategically use the law to tackle non-communicable diseases.

BE IN THE KNOW

As we continue to work towards impacting public health laws in the Caribbean, and collaborate on topics of interest for the region, we will share information on relevant issues to keep you in the know.

Click or copy these useful links in your browser for important material/updates:



THE SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS) MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON NCDs AND MENTAL HEALTH WAS HELD ON 14 - 16 JUNE 2023 | BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS

It set out an ambitious agenda to transform the capability of SIDS countries to proactively respond and effectively deliver health outcomes in relation to NCDs and mental health, and so become a vital partner for reaching Sustainable Development Goals target 3.4.

The resulting Bridgetown Declaration may be found at:

https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/ncds/sids-event/2023-bridgetown-declaration-on-ncds-and-mental-health.pdf?sfvrsn=5feda33f_11

Click or copy these useful links in your browser for important material/updates:

NCD RISK-FACTORS RELATED MATERIALS:

- PAHO publication regarding the “Elimination of Industrially Produced Trans-fatty Acids. A Regulatory Drafting Tool”, which points out the steps and suggestions to be used as model legislation: https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/55242/PAHONMHRF210031_eng.pdf OR <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/55242>
- The Plan of Action for the Elimination of Industrially Produced TFA in the Americas <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/51965>
- Publication in the Pan American Journal of Public Health on the evaluation of progress of the Plan of Action for the Elimination of Industrially Produced Trans-fatty Acids <https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/56327/v46e1302022.pdf>
- Report from the PAHO’s 2019 Regional workshop on the Regulatory impact analysis for the development of policies to eliminate industrially-produced trans-fatty acids in the Americas https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/52593/PAHONMHRF200034_eng.pdf
- Central PAHO webpage about Trans-fatty Acids: <https://www.paho.org/en/topics/trans-fatty-acids>

UPDATES ON OBESITY:

- Direct link to report on the World Obesity Atlas 2023 https://www.worldobesityday.org/assets/downloads/World_Obesity_Atlas_2023_Report.pdf
- <https://www.worldobesityday.org/resources/entry/world-obesity-atlas-2023>

UPCOMING EVENTS:

WEBINAR: BREAKING BARRIERS: TRADE, ECONOMICS & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS IN SHAPING OBESITY PREVENTION POLICIES IN THE CARIBBEAN JUNE 30, 2023 AT 9:00 AM AST

Zoom link:
<https://paho-org.zoom.us/j/89192425075>



SHORT COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND THE LAW

The course explores the role the law plays specifically in relation to NCD prevention and control with special reference to the Commonwealth Caribbean.

Class dates: July 12 - August 2, 2023

Time: 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m

For further details, please contact:

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Oscar Cabrera, Programme Director, Health & Human Rights Initiative at the O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at: foodlegalinnovation@georgetown.edu

