

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	The implications of nicotine vaping products for tobacco control in ASEAN low- and middle-income countries: in-depth interviews with experts from the region
AUTHORS	Stubbs, Thomas; White, Victoria; Yong, Hua; Toumbourou, John

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Liber, Alex C. Georgetown University
REVIEW RETURNED	17-Mar-2023

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>General Comments</p> <p>This article describes the beliefs of tobacco control experts in ASEAN LMIC countries towards NVP markets and policy. It captures a great deal of interesting texture and detail about what experts think. While I make several comments below that ask the authors to interrogate the views of their respondents more critically, that never does happen, which I think is a major weakness of this manuscript. However, the work certainly has scholarly merit and demonstrates that a lot of thought and effort went into the collection a preparation of the interviews presented here. I think the authors have done a good job following transparency guidelines as well. I make a lot of challenges to the views of the respondents below that I wish were somehow included in the paper as I believe interrogating these views and trying to really spell out logic and preferences would create an even stronger final product. I recommend major revisions.</p> <p>Specific Comments</p> <p>Page 6 Line 38: Maybe also note that many skeptics of gateway effects point to significantly lower smoking prevalence in younger cohorts as evidence against gateway effects. It's not just about common liability.</p> <p>Page 7 Line 17: The authors are excellently highlighting the divergent state of the NVP literature. I wish that this paragraph ended with a better transition sentence about how this contested scientific area is being translated into a diverse array of policymaking environments around the world. They wrote a good introduction, and I'd love for the audience not to be left hanging without direction as the topic shifts into the next paragraph!</p> <p>Page 7 Line 31: The evidence for multinational NVP company expansion into LMICs rests on one citation about JUUL moving into Indonesia. However, it seems that Juul withdrew from Indonesia in February 2020 (http://bit.ly/3JKJUHA) just seven months after the publication of the article (July 2019) highlighting it's expansion into Indonesia. The cited van der Eijk et al., piece does not highlight a case where a multinational NVP company purchased a local manufacturer either, it only poses the hypothetical. I think multinational entry in the ASEAN NVP markets is more hypothetical</p>
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	<p>than real and I think the authors should acknowledge that reality. The same applies to Page 22 Lines 51-58.</p> <p>Page 7 Lines 37-45: For countries with incredibly restrictive access to NVPs, these prevalence rates are incredibly high. How is current use being defined here?</p> <p>Page 8 Line 20: Say something about the broad intent of these policies rather than just saying they responded with policies. What was the general goal of these collected policies?</p> <p>Page 8 Line 24: Indonesia should be listed as a country that allows sale, importation and use. Also, the authors should mention that the Philippines has shifted repeatedly on the matter of e-cigarette sale and use in the aftermath of the EVALI outbreak towards prohibition and again towards liberalization in preceding years. A suggested language to discuss regulation (DOI: 10.1111/1468-0009.12570)</p> <p>Page 9 Line 29: How were conflicts of interest with the tobacco industry assessed? How did these exclusion criteria affect the results of the interviews?</p> <p>Page 11 Line 52: Why do the respondents think that NVPs threaten public health in a country with 33% smoking prevalence? I'm not sure there is a scenario where NVP use could increase the harm to Indonesia compared to the current harm it suffers from cigarette use, even if the entire country took up vaping.</p> <p>Page 12 Line 40: If NVP use overtakes smoking and is less harmful than the most dangerous consumer product in the world, why is that a bad thing?</p> <p>Page 12 Line 49: But isn't that a good thing? Do they want cigarettes to be cheaper? Even though I have a hard time believing that costs are lower for NVPs in these countries (device costs should not be ignored and this should be systematically measured), why is this a problem? This also applies to Page 17 Line 38 and Page 22 Line 26.</p> <p>Page 13 Line 47: The only team with an NVP sponsor (McLaren sponsored by British American Tobacco) is not winning many races... I'm not sure how many fans they are attracting with such results.</p> <p>Page 14 Line 17: Again, I thought NVPs were different from cigarettes. The opposite assumption seems to be running through all these interviews, a belief that NVPs are fundamentally the equals of cigarettes. The question this raises to me is whether policy preferences align too. There are hints throughout that more prohibitionist regulatory stances are preferred for NVPs than cigarettes, implying that the threat from NVPs is perceived to be greater than for cigarettes.</p> <p>Page 14 Line 54: This description of fancy modern vape shops contrasts markedly with my experience with these retailers in the US and the well-described aesthetic in the UK (doi: 10.1111/1468-4446.12981). Is this description coming from an owner or a vaper, or a person who has a fairly negative view about NVPs? This comes through in theme 3.</p> <p>Page 15 Line 35: The evidence in this section does not point to why these experts call for a complete ban on these devices. Could the authors add more about the reasoning on this point? The quotes included mostly just talk about the existence of harm and not the logic of why prohibition is the preferred regulatory stance.</p> <p>Page 15 Line 42: Note that the Hartmann-Boyce Cochrane Review had only reached conclusions with moderate certainty during the interviews (2021). The authors note in the introduction that this review has reached high certainty. As the Participant may be referring to that review in 2021 and asking to wait until high certainty is reached, it would be interesting to know if their opinion has been revised in light of the updated Cochrane review's conclusion.</p>
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	<p>Page 19 Line 17: Does PMI sell an NVP in Malaysia? They have IQOS, which is a heated tobacco product, not an NVP, but I don't think they have an NVP. There are some IQOS NVP subbrands (IQOS VEEV in New Zealand) and JUUL was minority-owned by Altria which is not part of PMI, so I have no idea what brand is being referred to here. This expert may have made an error. The following quote also begs clarity. Are the sleek fruity color cheap devices being sold in Malaysia made by PMI, BAT, JTI or Imperial? I'm not sure that is the case. Euromonitor's July 2022 Country Report titled "Smokeless Tobacco, E-Vapour Products and Heated Tobacco in Malaysia" says the following about the Malay NVP market: "AJ Vape Worldwide is the leading player within e-vapour products in 2021, with a retail value share of 6%... AJ Vape Worldwide remained the largest player in e-vapour products in value terms in 2021, due to its leading position in e-liquids. Many vapers appreciate AJ Vape's strong resonance with the local culture and its interesting flavour offerings. However, the company experienced rising competition from smaller players, included under "others", that saw an increasing value share, as consumers turned to the cheaper products. More consumers turned online to look for products, with e-commerce seeing a continued rise, reaching a double-digit value share. Meanwhile, the leading brand in open vaping systems charging and vaporising devices, SMOK from Shenzhen IVPS Technology, also saw strong competition from other brands with a lower entry price. Open vaping systems charging and vaporising devices are becoming increasingly affordable, and this was especially the case in 2021, as retailers started to either lower their prices or offer reductions to encourage consumption."</p> <p>No transnational tobacco company is controlling the Malay market.</p> <p>Page 20 Line 42: I'd be keen to know if experts who had asked for giving the evidence time to strengthen have changed their views or if they have stayed put and why.</p> <p>Page 22 Line 35: These experts viewed progress on tobacco control more in terms of decreasing nicotine addiction than in terms of reducing the health harms of tobacco. I may be misreading, and I have not read all the transcripts. Still, the definition of tobacco control progress played some pivotal role here, and the wide preference for NVP prohibition seems tied closely to how progress is defined.</p> <p>Page 22 Line 49: This is the first mention of CSR. Please add it earlier in the paper if it will be referenced here.</p> <p>Page 23 Line 3: The cigarette market is already captured by transnational tobacco companies (TTC) in ASEAN. This should not be phrased as hypothetical, unlike the NVP scenario. According to Euromonitor TTC's cigarette volume share in 2021 was Philippines 99.6%, Malaysia 98 %, Myanmar 87%, Cambodia 75%, Laos 71%, Thailand 54%, Vietnam 45%, and Indonesia 39%.</p>
REVIEWER	Brown, Jennifer L Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health
REVIEW RETURNED	06-May-2023
GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This study explored the perceived implications of electronic cigarettes containing nicotine in the ASEAN region by conducting in-depth interviews with key informants. Overall, this paper was well written and I appreciated the inclusion of statements on reflexivity. I have some minor suggestions for the paper, included below.</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>1. You might consider the language used in the paper to refer to</p>

	<p>electronic cigarettes. I know in Australia “nicotine vaping product” is commonly used, but using “electronic cigarettes” might be more consistent with efforts to use more precise language for products like electronic cigarettes, HTPs, etc. Here is a paper discussing this issue - https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/30/4/359.</p> <p>2. In the discussion of risks and benefits, I would suggest adding a few sentences on the issue of dual use of electronic cigarettes and combustible cigarettes.</p> <p>3. You mention the criticisms of the 2022 systematic review on the use of electronic cigarettes for cessation. I recommend adding a sentence or two on the criticisms surrounding the Cochrane review as well for a more balanced overview.</p> <p>4. Some readers may not be familiar with the ASEAN region. It would be helpful to list the countries that are member states.</p> <p>5. On page 7, you state “Studies also show that NVPs have become increasingly popular among young people in ASEAN LMICs...”. I might add a qualifier here. Is this statement true in the countries that ban electronic cigarettes?</p> <p>Results</p> <p>6. The results section is well organized. However, instead of using headers like Theme 1, Theme 2, etc., I think it would be more useful to add a short title (e.g., NVPs as an emerging threat).</p> <p>7. Participants 8 and 11 seem to be overrepresented in the quotes included in the results. Are there quotes you can add from participants that aren't yet quoted?</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>8. Please expand on the implications of your findings. For example, how do you expect these views to impact policy and resources allocated for communication programs, research, etc. in the ASEAN countries?</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer 1's comments	Authors' response
<p>General Comments</p> <p>This article describes the beliefs of tobacco control experts in ASEAN LMIC countries towards NVP markets and policy. It captures a great deal of interesting texture and detail about what experts think. While I make several comments below that ask the authors to interrogate the views of their respondents more critically, that never does happen, which I think is a major weakness of this manuscript. However, the work certainly has scholarly merit and demonstrates that a lot of thought and effort went into the collection a preparation of the interviews presented here. I think the authors have done a good job following transparency guidelines as well. I make a lot of challenges to the views of the respondents below that I wish were somehow included in the paper as I believe interrogating these views and trying to really spell out logic and preferences would create an even stronger final product. I recommend major revisions.</p>	<p>We kindly thank the reviewer for their feedback on our manuscript and have addressed each of their comments below. As suggested, we have revised various sections of the manuscript to highlight the participants underlying beliefs and assumptions regarding the relative risk and harms of NVPs and cigarette smoking, as well as challenge and interrogate these views. We have also aimed to illustrate the tobacco control experts' diverse and sometimes conflicting viewpoints regarding NVPs.</p>
Specific Comments	We have added a section at the bottom

<p>Page 6 Line 38: Maybe also note that many skeptics of gateway effects point to significantly lower smoking prevalence in younger cohorts as evidence against gateway effects. It's not just about common liability.</p>	<p>of paragraph two of the introduction to describe the second argument against gateway effects. This section includes a study by Levey et al. 2019 which shows a declining trend in youth smoking prevalence alongside vaping uptake rather than an increased prevalence, suggesting vaping is not contributing to smoking uptake among this population.</p> <p>In addition, we have added a sentence about a qualitative study with young people in the UK that also challenges the gateway effects of NVPs.</p>
<p>Page 7 Line 17: The authors are excellently highlighting the divergent state of the NVP literature. I wish that this paragraph ended with a better transition sentence about how this contested scientific area is being translated into a diverse array of policymaking environments around the world. They wrote a good introduction, and I'd love for the audience not to be left hanging without direction as the topic shifts into the next paragraph!</p>	<p>We have added a reference and linking sentence at the end of this paragraph to highlight how this contested area of research has been translated into diverse policymaking around NVPs globally, highlight the UK, Australia and New Zealand as examples of different NVP policies.</p>
<p>Page 7 Line 31: The evidence for multinational NVP company expansion into LMICs rests on one citation about JUUL moving into Indonesia. However, it seems that Juul withdrew from Indonesia in February 2020 (http://bit.ly/3JKJUHA) just seven months after the publication of the article (July 2019) highlighting it's expansion into Indonesia. The cited van der Eijk et al., piece does not highlight a case where a multinational NVP company purchased a local manufacturer either, it only poses the hypothetical. I think multinational entry in the ASEAN NVP markets is more hypothetical than real and I think the authors should acknowledge that reality. The same applies to Page 22 Lines 51-58.</p>	<p>We have rewritten this section to clarify that some evidence suggests that multinational NVP companies may be reaching ASEAN LMICs and added a more recent citation (2022) to support this claim. We have linked this claim to additional, recent evidence showing the uptake of NVPs among young people in various ASEAN LMICs.</p> <p>To the second point – we have rewritten the text on page 22 to highlight that evidence from Western high-income countries and some evidence from the ASEAN region suggests that multinational NVP companies might be pursuing this market through the acquisition of local manufacturers, but further research is needed to explore this business strategy.</p>
<p>Page 7 Lines 37-45: For countries with incredibly restrictive access to NVPs, these prevalence rates are incredibly high. How is current use being defined here?</p>	<p>Since these studies used different definitions to measure current use, we have rewritten this section to state that evidence suggests that young people have started experimenting and regularly using these devices in various countries in the region.</p>
<p>Page 8 Line 20: Say something about the broad intent of these policies rather than just saying they responded with policies. What was the general goal of these collected policies?</p>	<p>We have rewritten the opening sentence of this paragraph to explain that some countries have implemented policies that aim to fully restrict access to NVPs while others aim only to limit access.</p>
<p>Page 8 Line 24: Indonesia should be listed as a country that allows sale, importation and use. Also,</p>	<p>First, we have added text to illustrate that Indonesia allows the sale, import</p>

the authors should mention that the Philippines has shifted repeatedly on the matter of e-cigarette sale and use in the aftermath of the EVALI outbreak towards prohibition and again towards liberalization in preceding years. A suggested language to discuss regulation (DOI: 10.1111/1468-0009.12570)	<p>and use of NVPs.</p> <p>Second, we have added a new sentence and citation to describe how the Philippines has shifted its policy stance to NVPs, with the most recent policy favouring liberalization.</p> <p>Third, we have also updated the wording of the last sentence in this paragraph to highlight how policy stances across the region are varied and dynamic.</p>
Page 9 Line 29: How were conflicts of interest with the tobacco industry assessed? How did these exclusion criteria affect the results of the interviews?	<p>The participants self-reported having no conflicts of interest with the tobacco industry. This information has been added to the exclusion criteria in the manuscript.</p> <p>We feel that excluding those with tobacco industry conflicts of interest was fundamental to this paper's focus on tobacco control experts only.</p>
Page 11 Line 52: Why do the respondents think that NVPs threaten public health in a country with 33% smoking prevalence? I'm not sure there is a scenario where NVP use could increase the harm to Indonesia compared to the current harm it suffers from cigarette use, even if the entire country took up vaping.	We have rewritten the first sentence of Theme 1 to better highlight and interrogate the views (including contradictions and inconsistencies in those views) around the relative harms and potential risks of NVPs compared to cigarette smoking.
<p>Page 12 Line 40: If NVP use overtakes smoking and is less harmful than the most dangerous consumer product in the world, why is that a bad thing?</p> <p>Page 12 Line 49: But isn't that a good thing? Do they want cigarettes to be cheaper? Even though I have a hard time believing that costs are lower for NVPs in these countries (device costs should not be ignored and this should be systematically measured), why is this a problem? This also applies to Page 17 Line 38 and Page 22 Line 26.</p>	<p>As mentioned above, we have rewritten this paragraph to highlight and interrogate the participants' comments and their underlying assumptions about the relative risk of smoking and NVP use, as well as how their comments suggest an assumption that switching from smoking to NVPs would lead to increase public harms, not gains.</p> <p>To address the comment regarding Page 12 Line 38, we have also rewritten the bottom of paragraph one in theme four to address this point.</p> <p>To address the comment on Page 22 Line 26, we have rewritten this whole paragraph to summarise and interrogate the participants' comments and underlying assumptions regarding the relative risk of NVPs and cigarettes.</p>
Page 13 Line 47: The only team with an NVP sponsor (McLaren sponsored by British American Tobacco) is not winning many races... I'm not sure how many fans they are attracting with such results.	We have revised the sentence introducing this quote to illustrate that the NVP sponsoring of Formula 1 racing only partially emulates the tobacco industry's previous marketing strategies but is not directly comparable in scope or impact.
Page 14 Line 17: Again, I thought NVPs were	We have rewritten the last paragraph

different from cigarettes. The opposite assumption seems to be running through all these interviews, a belief that NVPs are fundamentally the equals of cigarettes. The question this raises to me is whether policy preferences align too. There are hints throughout that more prohibitionist regulatory stances are preferred for NVPs than cigarettes, implying that the threat from NVPs is perceived to be greater than for cigarettes.	of this sentence to highlight how some participants' appeared to hold beliefs that NVPs and cigarettes are comparable in terms of potential risks and harms.
Page 14 Line 54: This description of fancy modern vape shops contrasts markedly with my experience with these retailers in the US and the well-described aesthetic in the UK (doi: 10.1111/1468-4446.12981). Is this description coming from an owner or a vaper, or a person who has a fairly negative view about NVPs? This comes through in theme 3.	In the middle of paragraph four of the introduction, we have added a new sentence and citation to describe how vape stores are prolific in Indonesia, where young people can buy and try these devices. As one of the manuscript's authors has lived and worked in Indonesia, they can verify the widespread existence of these vape stores in Indonesia. Consequently, we have added new text at the bottom of the data analysis section to explain that the authors have experience living and researching in Cambodia and Indonesia.
Page 15 Line 35: The evidence in this section does not point to why these experts call for a complete ban on these devices. Could the authors add more about the reasoning on this point? The quotes included mostly just talk about the existence of harm and not the logic of why prohibition is the preferred regulatory stance.	We have rewritten this first paragraph to focus only on participants' opposition to NVPs use for smoking cessation and harm reduction, as well as the reasons for this position. We have removed the section on calls for a complete ban. Moreover, we have rewritten the whole second paragraph of theme 3 to address this point and address earlier comments about highlighting and critiquing the underlying assumptions of participants.
Page 15 Line 42: Note that the Hartmann-Boyce Cochrane Review had only reached conclusions with moderate certainty during the interviews (2021). The authors note in the introduction that this review has reached high certainty. As the Participant may be referring to that review in 2021 and asking to wait until high certainty is reached, it would be interesting to know if their opinion has been revised in light of the updated Cochrane review's conclusion.	Unfortunately, as follow-up interviews with the experts were beyond the scope of this study, we were unable to address this question.
Page 19 Line 17: Does PMI sell an NVP in Malaysia? They have IQOS, which is a heated tobacco product, not an NVP, but I don't think they have an NVP. There are some IQOS NVP subbrands (IQOS VEEV in New Zealand) and JUUL was minority-owned by Altria which is not part of PMI, so I have no idea what brand is being referred to here. This expert may have made an error. The following quote also begs clarity. Are the sleek fruity color cheap devices being sold in Malaysia made by PMI, BAT, JTI or Imperial? I'm not sure that is the case. Euromonitor's July 2022 Country Report titled "Smokeless Tobacco, E-Vapour Products and Heated Tobacco in Malaysia"	To address this point, we have removed this participant's quote and rewritten this paragraph to highlight how participants concerns and suspicion about the tobacco industry operating in the NVP market is grounded in their accounts of the industry's past unethical conduct and efforts to undermine tobacco control and promote cigarettes to young people. We feel this revised paragraph better described participants' overall views of the tobacco industry NVP activities.

<p>says the following about the Malay NVP market: "AJ Vape Worldwide is the leading player within e-vapour products in 2021, with a retail value share of 6%... AJ Vape Worldwide remained the largest player in e-vapour products in value terms in 2021, due to its leading position in e-liquids. Many vapers appreciate AJ Vape's strong resonance with the local culture and its interesting flavour offerings. However, the company experienced rising competition from smaller players, included under "others", that saw an increasing value share, as consumers turned to the cheaper products. More consumers turned online to look for products, with e-commerce seeing a continued rise, reaching a double-digit value share. Meanwhile, the leading brand in open vaping systems charging and vaporising devices, SMOK from Shenzhen IVPS Technology, also saw strong competition from other brands with a lower entry price. Open vaping systems charging and vaporising devices are becoming increasingly affordable, and this was especially the case in 2021, as retailers started to either lower their prices or offer reductions to encourage consumption."</p> <p>No transnational tobacco company is controlling the Malay market.</p>	
<p>Page 20 Line 42: I'd be keen to know if experts who had asked for giving the evidence time to strengthen have changed their views or if they have stayed put and why.</p>	<p>Follow-up interviews with the experts were beyond the scope of this study, so we were unable to address this question.</p>
<p>Page 22 Line 35: These experts viewed progress on tobacco control more in terms of decreasing nicotine addiction than in terms of reducing the health harms of tobacco. I may be misreading, and I have not read all the transcripts. Still, the definition of tobacco control progress played some pivotal role here, and the wide preference for NVP prohibition seems tied closely to how progress is defined.</p>	<p>To address this point and others above, we have rewritten this whole paragraph to highlight how policymaking has been hindered by lack of scientific consensus regarding the relative risks and smoking cessation potential of these devices, lack of clear goals regarding smoking harm reduction, and the absence of a framework to guide the development and implementation of policies. We have also added recommendations to address these issues.</p>
<p>Page 22 Line 49: This is the first mention of CSR. Please add it earlier in the paper if it will be referenced here.</p>	<p>In paragraph four of the introduction, we have added new text to highlight how WHO-FCTC aimed to restrict tobacco industry marketing and corporate social responsibility.</p>
<p>Page 23 Line 3: The cigarette market is already captured by transnational tobacco companies (TTC) in ASEAN. This should not be phrased as hypothetical, unlike the NVP scenario. According to Euromonitor TTC's cigarette volume share in 2021 was Philippines 99.6%, Malaysia 98 %, Myanmar 87%, Cambodia 75%, Laos 71%, Thailand 54%, Vietnam 45%, and Indonesia 39%.</p>	<p>This sentence referred to the transnational tobacco companies aiming to capture more of the NVP markets in ASEAN LMICs to offset declining smoking rates and cigarette sales. We have rewritten this sentence to clarify this point.</p>
<p>Reviewer 2's comments</p>	<p>Authors' response</p>
<p>Comments to the Author: This study explored the perceived implications of electronic cigarettes containing nicotine in the</p>	<p>We thank the reviewer for this feedback and have addressed each of their comments. We feel this process</p>

ASEAN region by conducting in-depth interviews with key informants. Overall, this paper was well written and I appreciated the inclusion of statements on reflexivity. I have some minor suggestions for the paper, included below.	has improved the quality of this manuscript.
Introduction 1. You might consider the language used in the paper to refer to electronic cigarettes. I know in Australia “nicotine vaping product” is commonly used, but using “electronic cigarettes” might be more consistent with efforts to use more precise language for products like electronic cigarettes, HTPs, etc. Here is a paper discussing this issue - https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/30/4/359 .	We thank the reviewer for this suggestion, and we considered it carefully. However, we decided to stay with “nicotine vaping product” because ENDS could include heated tobacco products, which weren’t the focus of this study. We feel that the term NVP differentiates these devices from Heated Tobacco products.
2. In the discussion of risks and benefits, I would suggest adding a few sentences on the issue of dual use of electronic cigarettes and combustible cigarettes.	In paragraph 3 of the introduction, we have added a sentence and two citations about dual use and its potential risks in relation to the risk and benefits of smoking cessation and harm reduction through NVP use. We have also added these two citations to the second paragraph of the discussion.
3. You mention the criticisms of the 2022 systematic review on the use of electronic cigarettes for cessation. I recommend adding a sentence or two on the criticisms surrounding the Cochrane review as well for a more balanced overview.	To address this point and make this paragraph clearer, we have rewritten this section to describe the results of the two systematic reviews and the two main arguments for and against NVP smoking cessation —namely, harm reduction (for) and dual use (against). We feel this revised approach better focuses on the key findings and arguments in the current literature. We have also added the most recent version of the Cochrane review.
4. Some readers may not be familiar with the ASEAN region. It would be helpful to list the countries that are member states.	To address this point, we have added a list of the ASEAN’s eight low- and middle-income countries, which are the focus of this study, to the middle of paragraph four of the introduction.
5. On page 7, you state “Studies also show that NVPs have become increasingly popular among young people in ASEAN LMICs...”. I might add a qualifier here. Is this statement true in the countries that ban electronic cigarettes?	Yes, this includes countries where e-cigarettes are banned like Cambodia and Thailand. To supplement statements about the region, we have added the country of individual studies showing increasing use among youth. This information can be compared to the section on which specific countries have fully and partially banned these devices, and which have no restrictions.
Results 6. The results section is well organized. However, instead of using headers like Theme 1, Theme 2, etc., I think it would be more useful to add a short title (e.g., NVPs as an emerging threat).	We have rewritten the theme headers with short titles for each theme (see red highlighted text at start of each theme)
7. Participants 8 and 11 seem to be overrepresented in the quotes included in the results. Are there quotes you can add from participants that aren’t yet quoted?	We have removed two quotes from participant 11 and one quote from participant 8. This change was made to ensure these two participants made up

	a more equal representation of the total quotes included in the study. At the start of theme 2, we have also added a quote from participant 1 to represent more of the participants' quotes in the manuscript.
Discussion 8. Please expand on the implications of your findings. For example, how do you expect these views to impact policy and resources allocated for communication programs, research, etc. in the ASEAN countries?	To address this point, we have rewritten paragraph four to highlight how our findings help illuminate why NVP policy is fragmented and inconsistent in ASEAN LMICs. This paragraph also provides recommendations how to address the underlying issues that continue to delay progress on NVP policymaking in the region.

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Brown, Jennifer L Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health
REVIEW RETURNED	03-Aug-2023
GENERAL COMMENTS	The authors have addressed my comments sufficiently. I recommend the manuscript be accepted.