

# Exposure to E-Cigarettes in Music Videos Tied to Increased Vaping by Young Adults

*Unregulated Product Placement  
Successfully Targeted Teens, USC Study  
Shows*

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, June 3, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The results of the latest of three studies conducted by researchers at the University of Southern California found that product placement of electronic cigarettes in music videos greatly increases the likelihood of young people—especially those under 21—to pick up the vaping habit.

E-cigarette imagery in music videos floats under-the-radar to effectively reach its target market. The study found that the exposure increased the likelihood of teens to try vaping compared to those 21 and older. The greater the exposure to music videos with vaping the more likely they are to vape.

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*Jon-Patrick Allem, principal investigator*

Product placement of electronic cigarette gear, logos and vaping clouds in music videos and other entertainment media is a successful strategy to evade regulations against directly advertising to minors. Federal law prohibits the sale of tobacco products to young adults under 21.

The first of the three studies examined the extent of e-cigarette product placement in music videos and researchers found about 4 percent of the videos reviewed in the top 100 Billboard songs in 2018 featured vaping. Significantly, those seven videos—including "No Brainer" by DJ Khaled and "Alone" by Halsey—got more than 1.6 billion views on YouTube during the period of the study.

**USC**  
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*and Society*

The second study surveyed 1,280 young adults (aged 18 to 24) in California to determine if the exposure to e-cigarettes in music videos influenced their decision to vape. Participants who recalled seeing vaping and vaping products in videos were nearly three times more likely to try e-cigarettes in the last month compared to those who were not exposed to the imagery. Those under 21 surveilled were nearly five times more likely to try e-cigarettes.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office requested the support of the USC research team in a case to ban e-cigarette companies from using videos to target minors with candy- and fruit-flavored vaping products. In 2021, the DA ordered an injunction against one company, KandyPens, prohibiting product placement in music videos, and fined the company \$1.2 million.

The third study, recently concluded, took a deeper dive to determine the difference between participants exposed to e-cigarette imagery in music videos and those who watched with the vaping digitally deleted.

Analysis of the results revealed that the 18- to 24-year-old participants who watched music videos with e-cigarette imagery were more likely to try vaping, compared to participants who viewed the same videos with e-cigarette images removed.

"Our experimental study found that exposure to music videos with e-cigarette product placement and imagery impacted intentions to try e-cigarettes in the future among young adults who had never used e-cigarettes," said Jon-Patrick Allem, an assistant professor of research and public health at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and principal investigator of the study. "We know that behaviors are learned and reinforced through the observation of others' behaviors, which makes these music video product placements problematic."

The findings of this investigation will be published in [Addictive Behaviors](#) in July 2022. Results of the findings of the first two studies were previously published in [Health Education & Behavior](#) and [Nicotine & Tobacco Research](#).

The studies' evidence of the direct association concludes that restricting e-cigarette product placement in music videos aimed at young adults could minimize exposure and reduce vaping with this targeted demographic. The Tobacco Master Settlement Act of 1998 that banned such promotional activity for tobacco should also apply to e-cigarettes.

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