Guest blog: Lynne Dawkins puts the Commission straight

written by Clive Bates | 13 January 2014



A guest post from Lynne Dawkins, one of the UK's foremost experts in e-cigarettes and related technologies: many will remember her excellent introductory presentation at the November E-cigarettes Summit. She has just become the second scientist to dispute the European Commission's use of their research in a letter (below). Dr Farsalinos wrote to the Commission last week say ing that it had misrepresented his science. Now Lynne Dawkins has done the same.

Here's the guest post from Lynne, explaining her concern…

_____GUEST POST _____

The European Commission's latest Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) suggests, among other things, a limit on the size of refill containers and cartridges. In their justification document, I am referenced as stating that 'disposable e-cigarettes and e-cigarettes with sealed cartridges limit the risk that users come into contact with nicotine liquid'. This succeeds a statement that 'liquid can be contaminated, expose users to toxic nicotine liquid and are a safety risk for children'. I did not use the word 'risk' in this context and believe that my words have been distorted and taken out of context. Below is my letter to the Commissioners and Members of the European Parliament:

> ***Please Do Not Distort My Words To Justify Your Policy***
>
> *I am the other scientist named by the Commission in its defence of their proposed restrictions on e-cigarettes in the current version of the TPD.*
>
> *As with the research of Dr Konstantinos Farsalinos, SANCO officials have distorted my words and taken my statement out of context. Let me make it very clear – my research does not provide any justification for proposals to reduce the size of e-cigarette tanks and refill containers.*

Common sense would suggest that this would increase the risk of liquid spills as well as choking hazards for children as users would have to increase the number of cartridges or refills used each day.

There is a large volume of science available for any officials and MEPs who want to read it. For instance Burstyn, January 2014 on the safety of e-cigarette vaper; West, December 2013 on limits to NRT efficacy and the Oklahoma study, October 2013 on the gateway issue. Other studies show nicotine is much less toxic than the Commission's limits assume.

It is for regulators and MEPs to decide whether or not to listen to scientists or to business interests. But it is not for them to claim that there is scientific support for their current proposals. Policy affecting the health of Europe's smokers is so important that it needs to be built on robust science not fabrications.

1. *European Commission. Factsheet on Tobacco Products Directive – E-cigarettes 2013*
2. *Burstyn, January 2014 Peering through the mist: systematic review of what the chemistry of contaminants in electronic cigarettes tells us about health risks BMC Public Health 2014, **14**:18*
3. *West R, Want to stop smoking? See a specialist. Addiction, December 2013*
4. *Wagener TL, Presentation to the American Association for Cancer Research, National Harbor October 2013 reported in Forbes and Health Day.*
5. *Solarino B et al, February 2010, Death due to ingestion of nicotine-containing solution: case report and review of the literature. Forensic Sci Int. 2010 Feb 25;195(1-3):e19-22.*

With kind regards,

Lynne Dawkins

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