



A qualitative study of support provided by vape shops to people wanting to use e-cigarettes to quit smoking

Background

E-cigarettes are the most popular method of help to give up smoking in the UK and most e-cigarettes are bought in specialist vape shops¹. Vape shops are the ‘front line’ of smoking cessation advice for consumers who choose not to access formal medical advice. The support given is not standardised and content varies between shops^{2,3,4}. Some evidence that quitters’ interaction with vape shops can reduce the risk of relapse back to smoking^{6,7}.

Method

The data presented here are a part of the wider ongoing ECtra qualitative study⁶ exploring in-depth participant perspectives of e-cigarette use over time.

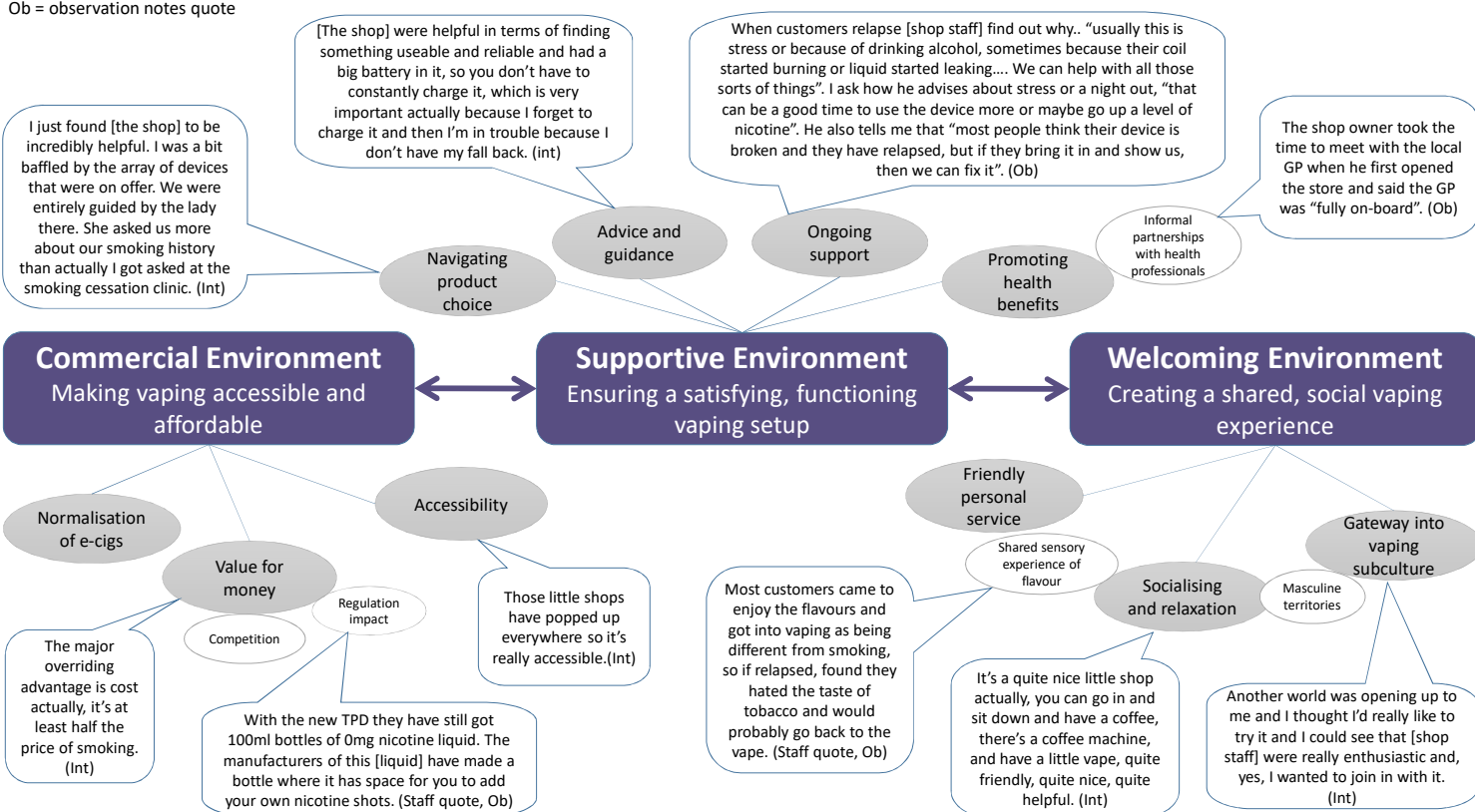
- In-depth interviews with 40 e-cigarette using quitters
- Observations in 6 urban and rural vape shops
- Interview transcript data (relating to shops) and observation notes analysed using inductive thematic analysis⁸ and triangulated.



Emergent findings: Thematic map with illustrative quotes

Int = interview participant quote
Ob = observation notes quote

RQ: How do vape shops support smoking abstinence?



Conclusions

Vape shops provide a competitive commercial environment, adapting to legislative changes, to ensure that quitters have easy access to value products. Rather than smoking cessation medical advice, attempts were made by shops to understand customers’ smoking preferences in order that advice could be tailored about the most appropriate product, strength, and liquid. Vape shops offer an ongoing point of contact for experimenting with devices and liquids to suit individual needs, offering practical help and maintenance, and providing important safety advice. The social environment of shop offers an identity related aspect to vaping that may support long-term smoking abstinence. Local policy and partnership working between health professionals and vape shops should be explored. For example, Leicester Stop Smoking Service have vape shop staff helping with volunteer outreach and a discount scheme for homeless people.

References

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