

# In China, e-cigarette and HTP brand websites violate regulatory restrictions.

Enhanced monitoring and enforcement of the ban on online sales and flavored products is necessary to prevent online sales and marketing exposure.

## Online Marketing of E-Cigarettes and HTPs on Brand Websites in China

### Background

Effective Oct. 2022, China banned sales of flavored e-cigarettes (e-cigs), sales to minors under 18, and online sales outside of the national e-cigarette transaction platform overseen by China's State Tobacco Monopoly Administration. In addition, China has not permitted any sales of heated tobacco products (HTPs). We examined online marketing strategies post-implementation of the new restrictions.

### Methods

- Webpages from 29 e-cig and 3 HTP sites specifically targeting people in China, determined by web domain or country selection, were collected between June and Nov. 2023
- A total of 687 webpages within two clicks of the site homepage were coded and analyzed

### Results

- One site (HTP brand IQOS) offered online sales
- 81% of websites (23 e-cig, 3 HTP) portrayed their brand as responsible or capable of self-regulation
- 47% of websites (12 e-cig, 3 HTP) used claims of lower health risks, and 41% assured device safety (11 e-cig, 2 HTP)
- Non-tobacco flavors were present on 22% of websites (6 e-cig, 1 HTP)

### Most prevalent flavor descriptors in product names

- Fruit (6 e-cig, 1 HTP)
- Mint/menthol (5 e-cig, 1 HTP)
- Coffee/tea (3 e-cig, 1 HTP)
- Other non-alcoholic beverages (4 e-cig)

### Most prevalent advertising appeals

Claims of innovation (78%, 23 e-cig, 2 HTP)

“World’s first needle-type low-temperature non-burning product.”

Luxury or high status (50%, 3 e-cig, 2 HTP)

“[Brand Name] is an electronic atomization brand company established in China with a mid-to-high-end and light luxury positioning.”

Flavor (44%, 11 e-cig, 3 HTP)



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Tobacco industry	E-cigarette & nicotine product industry	Pharma industry
NO	NO	NO
NO	NO	NO

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