

Despite Potential Dangers To Health, Hookah Smoking On The Rise

(NAPSA)—A 60-minute hookah or water-pipe smoking session compares to smoking more than 10 cigarettes. Yet, hookah smoking is on the rise among adolescents and young adults.

Commonly, hookah smoking consists of heating flavored tobacco, called shisha, with burning charcoal. When air moves through the shisha and charcoal, vapors and smoke are formed and bub-



Many people don't know the facts about hookah smoking.

bled through water before being inhaled. People often think that because the tobacco passes through water and other substances before inhalation that the product's dangers are eliminated. This is not the case.

Research suggests that hookah use may actually be as addictive and harmful as cigarette use. Hookah smoking can yield greater levels of nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide than conventional cigarettes. It has also been linked to lung cancer and loss of lung function.

Hookah use is currently unregulated by the federal government. While a growing number of local communities and states are adopting wide-ranging clean indoor air laws, in some areas, hookah bars can claim exemption from these ordinances.

It is difficult for individuals and communities to make informed decisions regarding hookah smoking because a full picture of the health effects does not currently exist, says the Society of Toxicology (SOT), a professional membership association of more than 7,800 scientists. SOT says that although a comprehensive health assessment does not exist, people should be aware of the risks already identified. For instance, hookah smoke contains higher levels of some cancer-causing chemicals than cigarette smoke.