

 Article Text

Article menu



Review



# Tobacco smoking using a waterpipe: a re-emerging strain in a global epidemic

W Maziak<sup>1,\*</sup>, K D Ward<sup>1,†</sup>, R A Afifi Soweid<sup>2</sup>, T Eissenberg<sup>1,‡</sup>

Correspondence to: Thomas Eissenberg Virginia Commonwealth University and Syrian Center for Tobacco Studies, 1112 East Clay Street, Suite B-08, Box 980205, Richmond, VA 23298, USA; teissenbvcu.edu

## Abstract

**Context:** The global tobacco epidemic may kill 10 million people annually in the next 20–30 years, with 70% of these deaths occurring in developing countries. Current research, treatment, and policy efforts focus on cigarettes, while many people in developing regions (Asia, Indian subcontinent, Eastern Mediterranean) smoke tobacco using waterpipes. Waterpipes are increasing in popularity, and more must be learned about them so that we can understand their effects on public health, curtail their spread, and help their users quit.

**Objective:** To conduct a comprehensive review regarding global waterpipe use, in order to identify current knowledge, guide scientific research, and promote public policy.

**Data sources:** A *Medline* search using as keywords “waterpipe”, “narghile”, “arghile”, “shisha”, “hookah”, “goza”, “hubble bubble” and variant spellings (for example, “hooka”; “hukka”) was conducted. Resources compiled recently by members of GLOBALink were used.

**Study selection:** Every identified published study related to waterpipe use was included.

**Data synthesis:** Research regarding waterpipe epidemiology and health effects is limited; no published studies address treatment efforts. Waterpipe use is increasing globally, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, where perceptions regarding health effects and traditional values may facilitate use among women and children. Waterpipe smoke contains harmful constituents and there is preliminary evidence linking waterpipe smoking to a variety of life threatening conditions, including pulmonary disease, coronary heart disease, and pregnancy related complications.

## Cookies and privacy

**Conclusions:** More scientific documentation and careful analysis is required before the spread of waterpipe use can be curbed. Empirically guided treatment and public policy strategies can be implemented.

We and our 337 partners store and access personal data, like browsing data or unique identifiers, on your device. This data helps us to improve our services and to provide you with a better experience. You can manage your preferences at any time by clicking the “Cookie settings” link on the bottom of the webpage. Your choices will have effect within our Website. For more details, refer to our Privacy Policy. [Cookie policy](#)








## We and our partners process data to provide:

Statistics from [Altmetric.com](#)  
Use precise geolocation data. Actively scan device characteristics for identification. Store and/or access information on a device. Personalised advertising and content, advertising and content measurement, audience research and services development.

[I Accept](#)[Reject All](#)[Manage preferences](#)



See more details

-  Picked up by **9** news outlets
-  Blogged by **1**
-  Referenced in **5** policy sources
-  On **1** Facebook pages
-  Referenced in **3** Wikipedia pages
-  Referenced in **1** clinical guideline sources
-  **267** readers on Mendeley

## Request Permissions

If you wish to reuse any or all of this article please use the link below which will take you to the Copyright Clearance Center's RightsLink service. You will be able to get a quick price and instant permission to reuse the content in many different ways.

Request permissions

View Full Text

## Footnotes

↩\*: Also Institute of Epidemiology and Social Medicine, University of Muenster, Germany

↩†: Also Department of Health and Sport Sciences, and Center for Community Health, University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee, USA

↩‡: Also Department of Psychology and Institute for Drug and Alcohol Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA

Read the full text or download the PDF:

Buy this article (£53)

Subscribe

## Cookies and privacy

I Accept

We and our **337** partners store and access personal data, like browsing data or unique identifiers, on your device. Selecting I Accept enables tracking technologies to support the purposes shown under we and our partners process data to provide. Selecting Reject All or withdrawing your consent will disable them. If trackers are disabled, some content and ads you see may not be as relevant to you. You can resurface this menu to change your choices or withdraw consent at any time by clicking the Cookie settings link on the bottom of the webpage. Your choices will have effect within our Website. For more details, refer to our Privacy Policy. [Cookie policy](#).

Reject All

[Manage preferences](#)

### We and our partners process data to provide:

Use precise geolocation data. Actively scan device characteristics for identification. Store and/or access information on a device. Personalised advertising and content, advertising and content measurement, audience research and services development.



CONTENT

Latest content

Current issue

**Cookies and privacy**

Archive

Browse by collection

Most read articles

Top cited articles

Responses

**We and our partners process data to provide:**

Use precise geolocation data and identify your device characteristics for identification. Store and/or access information on a device. Personalised advertising and content, advertising and content measurement, audience research and services development.

JOURNAL

I Accept

Reject All

Manage preferences



[About](#)

[Editorial board](#)

[Sign up for email alerts](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Thank you to our reviewers](#)

## AUTHORS

[Instructions for authors](#)

[Submit an article](#)

[Editorial policies](#)

[Open Access at BMJ](#)

[BMJ Author Hub](#)

## HELP

[Contact us](#)

[Reprints](#)

[Permissions](#)

[Advertising](#)

[Feedback form](#)

[Accessibility](#)



[Website Terms & Conditions](#)

[Privacy & Cookies](#)

[Contact BMJ](#)

[Cookie settings](#)

Online ISSN: 1468-3318      Print ISSN: 0964-4563

Copyright © 2026 BMJ Publishing Group Ltd. All rights, including for text and data mining, AI training, and similar technologies reserved.

### Cookies and privacy

We and our **337** partners store and access personal data, like browsing data or unique identifiers, on your device.

Selecting I Accept enables tracking technologies to support the purposes shown under we and our partners process data to provide. Selecting Reject All or withdrawing your consent will disable them. If trackers are disabled, some content and ads you see may not be as relevant to you. You can resurface this menu to change your choices or withdraw consent at any time by clicking the Cookie settings link on the bottom of the webpage. Your choices will have effect within our Website. For more details, refer to our Privacy Policy. [Cookie policy](#).

#### We and our partners process data to provide:

Use precise geolocation data. Actively scan device characteristics for identification. Store and/or access information on a device. Personalised advertising and content, advertising and content measurement, audience research and services development.

**I Accept**

**Reject All**

[Manage preferences](#)