Key Take Away:

- In 2015, almost all e-cigarette products sold in U.S. convenience stores and other assessed stores contained nicotine.

Key Findings:

- The study found that in 2015, 99.0% of e-cigarette products sold in the assessed channels contained nicotine (58,170,255 units) and 0.4% were zero nicotine (214,350 units).
  - 99.0% of disposables (19,225,029 units), 99.7% of rechargeables (13,351,954 units), and 98.8% of refills (25,593,273) contained nicotine.
  - 98.7% of flavored e-cigarette products (28,848,143) and 99.4% of nonflavored e-cigarette products (29,322,113) contained nicotine.

Additional points:

- This was the first study to use retail scanner data to assess demand for nicotine-containing e-cigarette products.
- The authors obtained unit sales data from January 11, 2015, to December 12, 2015, from The Nielsen Company for: convenience stores; supermarkets; mass merchandisers; drug, club, and dollar stores; and Department of Defense commissaries.
- The study assessed whether nicotine was present according to product type (disposables, rechargeables, and refills), geographic region, and flavor status based on nicotine strength listed in the Universal Product Codes.
- The data did not include purchases from tobacco specialty shops, “vape shops,” or online sources, which may account for more than half of the U.S. e-cigarette market. Aggregated data on sales from these types of retailers are not currently available.
- Studies of self-reported use of e-cigarettes suggest some consumer demand for zero-nicotine products. The current study’s findings suggest that self-reported nicotine consumption may be subject to bias, especially among youths who may not be aware that the products they are using contain nicotine.
- Findings reinforce the importance of warning labels for nicotine-containing products, ingredient reporting, and restrictions on sales to minors.