Student Name

AP Seminar - 1

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E-Cigarettes Impact in an Environmental Standpoint

Everywhere across the country, e-cigarettes are becoming a growing problem not only for the health of people using them but also for the environment. According to Dr. Yogi Hendlin from the Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, “E-waste, in general, is already an overwhelming problem, with 99 billion pounds discarded annually according to 2017 global estimates” (Source A). E-cigarette waste is becoming a larger problem for the environment the more adults and teens keep vaping, and actions need to be done to stop it from growing into a larger issue. To fully understand how e-cigarettes are having negative impacts, it is necessary to look at the toxic composition and the disposal of waste on the environment.

Surprisingly, e-cigarettes are advertised to be healthier than tobacco and normal cigarettes, but when looked into they are filled with more dangerous materials than just nicotine. According to an article called “Alert: Public Health Implications of Electronic Cigarette Waste” by Dr. Yogi Hendlin, “When littered or improperly discarded, broken devices can leach heavy metals, battery acid, and nicotine into the local environment and urban landscape, affecting humans and other organisms” (Source A). Dr. Hendlin comes across these facts with a serious tone to state that the composure of these products is dangerous and could harm an adult or child that came across them. In an article by David Eaton, who works at the NRC and the University of Washington, similar statements were made about the harmful products in e-cigarettes and

conventional cigarettes. He said that “E-cigarettes do contain some harmful byproducts like metal, but far less than conventional cigarettes.” (Source C). He set the mood in his article to be informational by explaining that e-cigarettes contain harmful metals and how the smoke from e-cigarettes can damage air quality and harm anyone who is breathing the smoke in. Not only can e-cigarettes dangerous materials be harmful to the environment, but they can also affect it by not being recycled properly.

Sadly, e-cigarette waste is a growing issue because of the way that it is not being disposed of properly. The largest area of e-cigarette disposal on the environment is around schools because most kids who vape are in school do not realize that the pods can not be thrown away in a trash can. In an article by Dr. Yogi H. Hendlin, she says that researchers conducted an experiment of collecting e-cigarette, tobacco, and cannabis waste from schools in the San Francisco Bay area to see how much is actually disposed of on school property. She said that “Overall, 893 waste items were collected, including 172 (19%) e-cigarette product waste items (nearly all were Juul or Juul-compatible pods and pod caps)” (Source B). This shows that e-cigarette waste is being disposed of improperly into the environment in school districts where kids smoking them is very high. Schools are not only being affected by the amount of trash from e-cigarette waste, but the environment around the area of disposal also is suffering a negative impact.

E-cigarettes have made significant impacts in a wide variety of areas, but their dangerous materials and the fact that they are not being disposed of properly are some of the components that have become detrimental to the environment. The rising issue of e-cigarette waste will continue to impact the natural environment and the adults, children, and schools that are a part of

it until measures are taken to stop the production or to control the disposal of the devices. Therefore, to fully try and save the earth from the negative impacts that e-cigarettes are creating, it is important to determine how to fix the environmental situations caused by the composition and use of e-cigarettes.

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