Electronic cigarettes have become increasingly popular over the past decade. This can be due to perceptions that e-cigs are a healthier alternative to traditional tobacco cigarettes. We as a class looked to determine the perceptions of community college student’s views on electronic cigarettes versus traditional tobacco cigarettes. Using a quantitative descriptive survey on paper, respiratory therapy students randomly questioned other community college students on a downtown campus outside a health science building and library. We found of all survey participants combined, 47.45% felt that second hand smoke from e-cigs was as harmful as tobacco cigarettes. 52.55% agreed with the e-cig smokers that e-cig second hand smoke is not as harmful as tobacco smoke. 63.82% of community college students that participated in the survey do not consider E-Cigs a healthier alternative to traditional tobacco cigarettes. 34.89% do consider e-cigs a healthier alternative to tobacco smoking. From the results above 44.17% of the participants believe that e-Cigs are beneficial to quitting tobacco cigarettes, and 55.54% of the participants say that it is not beneficial.

Permission: This project went through the human studies IRB process, and received written permission from system office and administration prior to gathering data from students. Students that participated in the survey were made aware that this project was voluntary and that they could choose not to participate if they desired.

Participants: The 160 (n=115) participants for this study came from large diverse public community college. The students were primarily between the ages of 18-24 (n=83). There were 14 participants between the ages of 25-32 (n=14). Between the ages 33-40 there were 12 participants (n=12). The lowest amount of participants were within the age range of 41-50 (n=5). One participant did not disclose and were listed as 99.

Procedure: Three Respiratory Care students conducted the survey on a downtown campus. The students collected raw data from surveys that was then tabulated in an excel document and analyzed via Pivot Tables. This was done to assess disaggregated responses to each of the survey questions.

The recent data from the American College Health Association shows that 19% of college students are current smokers. These results closely mirror those obtained in the above study results. The percentage of community college students within an urban city in Kentucky who were current smokers of either e-cigs or traditional tobacco cigarettes totaled 15.23%. This validates the results of the study in correlation with national average results. Multiple innovative programs encourage people to quit smoking. However, according to Wechsler et al (2001) nearly 56% of college health directors report that their college health centers offer some sort of smoking cessation program.

Louisville, KY has also seen some progress in air quality and curbing smoking in public areas. Once the smoke-free policy took place and after some time past, indoor pollution and air quality saw remarkable progress (Hahn, Rayens, Ridner, et al, 2010). It is necessary to establish comprehensive public health initiatives tailored for this specific group to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use among future students. Efforts directed at students who smoke should include cessation training. Based on students' desire to receive training in cessation strategies, skills related to tobacco control should be added to the curriculum (DeBernado, Aldinger, Mawood, et al, 1999).

Further research suggestions include altering the means in which the survey was conducted. Participants surveyed may produce more straightforward answers if directed to an app on a mobile device, or website to complete the survey via computer, instead of face-to-face. Suggestions to further this survey include a more in-depth question pool by increasing the quantity of the questions and more focused questions regarding smoking habits. Probing questions to see what college students really know and understand about the consequences of long term smoking habits. There is a big difference in having heard of pulmonary disease, COPD, and lung cancer and understanding what life looks with them.

