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## Data Article

# E-cigarette specialty retailers: Data to assess the association between retail environment and student e-cigarette use

Georgiana Bostean<sup>a,\*</sup>, Catherine M. Crespi<sup>b</sup>,  
Patsornkarn Vorapharuek<sup>c</sup>, William J. McCarthy<sup>d,1</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Sociology, Environmental Science & Policy Program, Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866, USA

<sup>b</sup> Department of Biostatistics, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, 650 Charles E. Young Dr. South, 51-254 CHS, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1772, USA

<sup>c</sup> Environmental Management, University of San Francisco, Harney Science Center, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080, USA

<sup>d</sup> UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, Center for Cancer Prevention & Control Research, A2-125 CHS, 650 Charles Young Drive, Los Angeles 90095-6900, USA

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## ABSTRACT

The retail environment is a major social determinant of health, yet little is known about the e-cigarette specialty retailer environment. The e-cigarette specialty retail environment may be associated with e-cigarette use by middle and high school students, an issue that was addressed in a recent article entitled, "E-cigarette use among students and e-cigarette specialty retailer presence near schools," by Bostean and colleagues (G. Bostean, C.M. Crespi, P. Vorapharuek, W.J. McCarthy, 2016 [1]). We present data relating to e-cigarette specialty retailers in Orange County, California. We describe the data collection method (including the search methodology to identify e-cigarette specialty retailers), present descriptive retailer data including school proximity, and provide data from multi-level regressions predicting individual-level student use of e-cigarettes based on presence of an e-cigarette specialty retailer in proximity to schools.

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\* Corresponding author. Fax: +1 714 997 6823.

E-mail addresses: [gbostean@chapman.edu](mailto:gbostean@chapman.edu) (G. Bostean), [ccrespi@ucla.edu](mailto:ccrespi@ucla.edu) (C.M. Crespi), [pvorapharuek@gmail.com](mailto:pvorapharuek@gmail.com) (P. Vorapharuek), [wmccarth@ucla.edu](mailto:wmccarth@ucla.edu) (W.J. McCarthy).

<sup>1</sup> Fax: +1 310 206 3566.

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## Specifications Table

Subject area	<i>Sociology, Public Health, Policy</i>
More specific subject area	<i>Policy, ecological models</i>
Type of data	<i>Table, figure</i>
How data was acquired	<i>Primary data collected through online search methodology</i>
Data format	<i>Analyzed</i>
Experimental factors	<i>N/A</i>
Experimental features	<i>N/A</i>
Data source location	<i>Orange County, California</i>
Data accessibility	<i>Data for vape store and school locations accessible.</i>

## Value of the data

- The descriptive data presented here for Orange County, CA can be compared to other counties for further insight into regional differences in e-cigarette specialty retailer environment.
- Regressions provide data about the distances to schools that are significantly associated student use of e-cigarettes.
- These data provide useful methodological information that will facilitate future studies of e-cigarette specialty retailer environment.

## 1. Data

E-cigarettes are sold by various retailers, such as liquor stores, convenience stores, and gas stations, and even on the internet [2]. E-cigarette specialty retailers (i.e., “vape stores”) have emerged in many places, yet are understudied. Few studies have attempted to identify in order to assess and monitor the e-cigarette specialty environment.

A recent study examined the association between the presence of e-cigarette specialty retailers near schools and individual middle and high school student use of e-cigarettes [3]. The study focused on Orange County (OC), CA, an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse California county where ever use of e-cigarettes is higher than that of conventional cigarettes [4]. Prior to 2016, OC localities had few tobacco control regulations or e-cigarette regulations beyond the state law prohibiting the sale of e-cigarettes to minors [5].

We present a map of the distribution of retailers (Fig. 1), and descriptive data on e-cigarette specialty retailer environment in OC and how it relates to school locations (Table 1). We also present results from multi-level regressions that examine the effect of e-cigarette specialty retailer presence on individual-level e-cigarette use among middle and high school students; specifically, we present data from three buffer distances ( $\frac{1}{4}$  mile,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile, one mile) of schools, which can help guide future research on retailer proximity (Table 2).

## 2. Study design and methods

### 2.1. Methods for assessing e-cigarette specialty retailer environment

#### 2.1.1. Data

We compiled addresses for e-cigarette retailers in OC using a systematic internet search conducted during September 2014–March 2015 (as part of the Orange County E-cigarette Retailer Study). This online search methodology has been reported to be a valid and useful method by which to identify e-cigarette retailers in areas where there is no systematic licensure [6]. Using search engines including Google, Yelp, and Yellowpages, three trained researchers conducted searches using the

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