

# Shaping healthier behaviors: The role of JomSihat in addressing smoking and vaping

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## **ABSTRACT**

The increasing prevalence of smoking and vaping in Malaysia, particularly among youth, highlights the urgent need for targeted behavioral interventions. Recent studies show 84.5% of 307,109 school students simultaneously use traditional cigarettes and e-cigarettes. Weak regulations and marketing tactics aimed at youth fuel widespread nicotine addiction. Smoking-related illnesses already cost Malaysia 16.49% of its National Health Expenditure, according to the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA), adding to the nation's economic burden. JomSihat, a collaborative initiative by civil society organizations and the Ministry of Health Malaysia, addresses these issues through multi-faceted behavioral interventions. It leverages culturally relevant materials including booklets and videos, interactive workshops, and peer and family support systems to drive behavior change. The program targets youth, including school and university students, alongside key influencers like teachers and parents, emphasizing education and awareness. By promoting healthier lifestyle choices, Jom Sihat aims to reduce smoking and vaping prevalence while empowering youth to resist social and environmental pressures. Its adaptability, potential to influence attitudes, and alignment with Malaysia's public health goals position it as a promising model for long-term public health improvement and a replicable framework for other regions.

**Keywords:** Behavioral Interventions, Tobacco Control, Vaping Awareness, Youth Education, Public Health, JomSihat, Smoking Prevention.