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E-cigarette refill warning

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Users of e-cigarettes have been warned that the vast majority of refills are sub-standard with 90% containing chemicals not mentioned on the labels.

The alarming report from the consumer protection agency DGCCRF also showed that 13 out of the 14 chargers tested were sub-standard and nine had a risk of electric shock due to insulation failure.

Nearly three million French people '*vapotent*' regularly – half of them every day – and France is Europe's No1 market for 'vaping', just ahead of the UK, in a market worth €395million, with two-thirds of that being for refills.

But the DGCCRF said there were "numerous anomalies" on the tobacco substitutes' safety with many labeling problems and sub-standard or dangerous products.

Chemical tests on 110 refill liquids showed the majority did not contain the quantity of nicotine liquid specified on the label – with 6% being dangerous for not having child-proof caps or proper labeling. Already nearly 60,000 products have been withdrawn from the market and the agency said it was warning manufacturers, importers, distributors and shops to respect the regulations.

E-cigarettes are battery-powered cigarette substitutes that vaporize a solution to give inhaled doses of nicotine and last month Public Health England said that, once regulated, they should be available for prescription on the NHS. It was reacting to a study that found they were 95% less noxious than smoking tobacco ... however, it later emerged that the study had been funded by the e-cigarette industry.

The price of a pack of cigarettes is expected to rise next year as manufacturers react to proposals to give a greater margin to tobacconists, hit by falling sales. Next May will also see the introduction of non-branded packaging. Smoking is responsible for 90% of lung cancer and 73,000 premature deaths each year.

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