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Background

- The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations mandated an indoor smoking ban in 1992 in U.S. hospitals¹
- Nearly 4,000 hospitals, health care systems, and clinics in the U.S. have adopted 100% smoke-free campuses, helping to de-normalize smoking and reduce secondhand smoke exposure on hospital grounds²⁻³
- Mounting concerns exist about the increasing use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and the impact of such use on smoke and tobacco-free policies
- To date, no systematic data describes e-cigarette policies on hospital campuses

Methods

- Researchers surveyed all hospitals in North Carolina (n=121); 75 hospitals completed the survey (response rate=62%)
- Survey questions assessed what proportion of hospitals have developed e-cigarette policies, how policies have been implemented and communicated, and what motivators and barriers have influenced the development of e-cigarette regulations
- Research staff contacted the human resource director or other qualified hospital staff at each hospital to complete the survey

Results

Figure 1. NC hospital campus tobacco policies

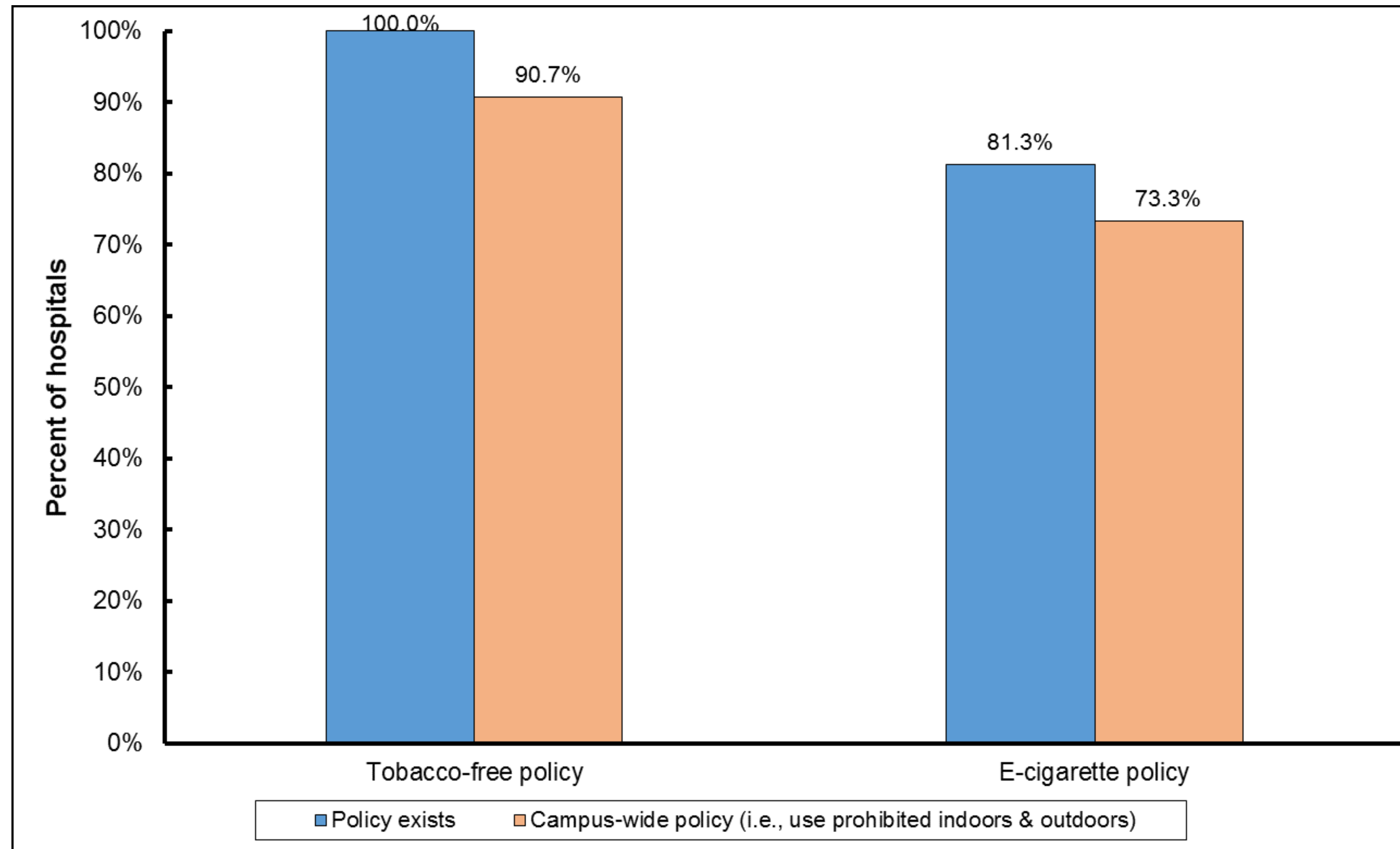
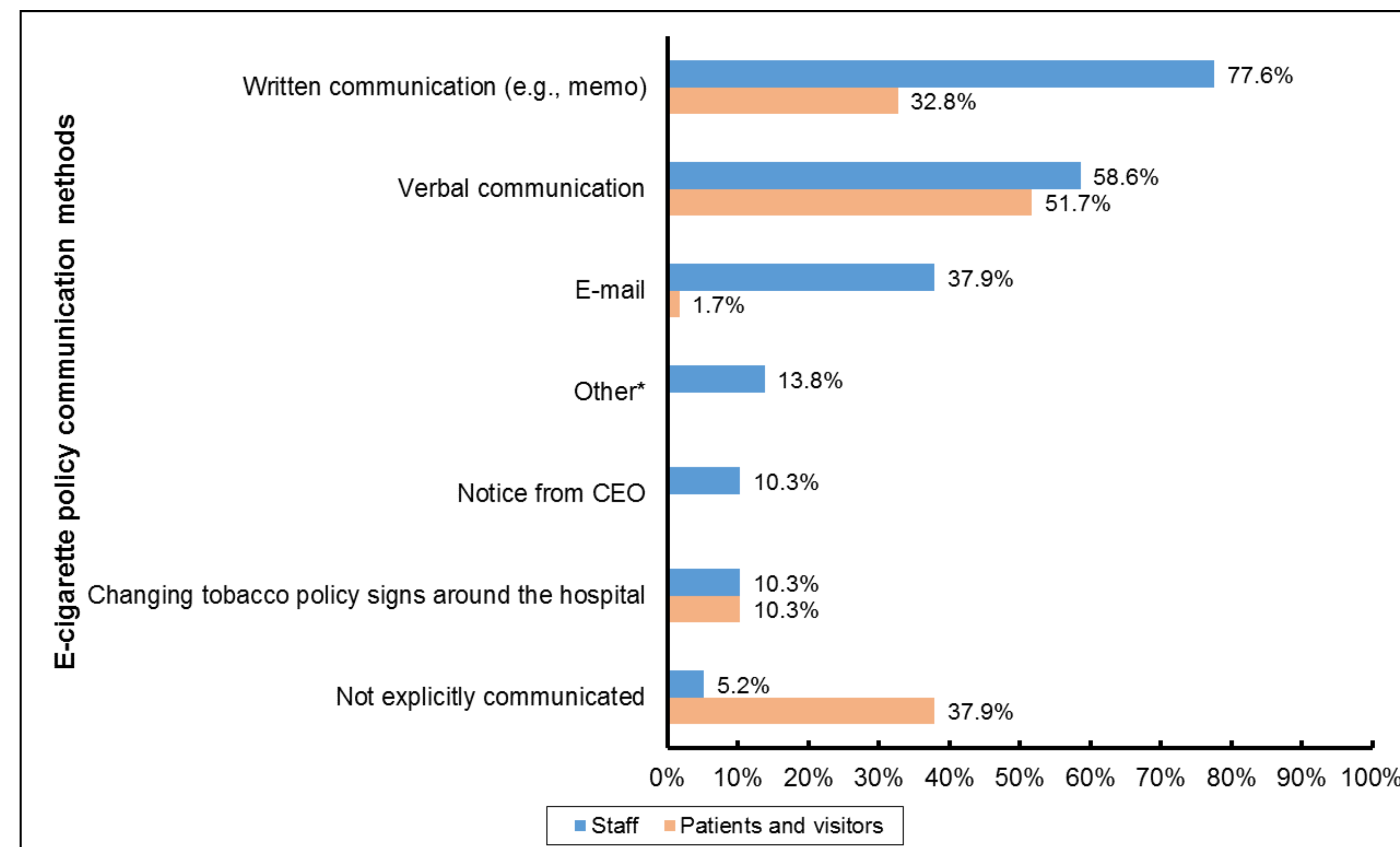


Figure 2. E-cigarette policy communication methods



*Other includes communication through staff meetings and policy revision updates

Results

- 81% of hospitals reported the existence of a policy regulating the use of e-cigarettes; the majority of policies were campus-wide
- Nearly all survey respondents with an e-cigarette policy reported that hospitals added e-cigarettes into an existing tobacco use policy
- Roughly 40% of hospitals reported that e-cigarette policies had not been explicitly communicated to patients and visitors

Limitations

- Because results are self-reported, responses may be influenced by the respondent's extent of involvement and experience in hospital policies
- The potential for non-response bias exists; however, a sufficiently high response rate and no significant differences between responders and non-responders in terms of demographics or the existence of an e-cigarette policy reduces this limitation

Conclusions

- Most hospitals in North Carolina regulate the use of e-cigarettes on campus and have incorporated e-cigarette policies into existing tobacco-free policies
- Widespread incorporation of e-cigarette policies into existing smoke and tobacco-free campus policies is feasible but requires communication to staff, patients, and visitors for maximum impact
- Findings should encourage other hospitals across the U.S. and internationally to incorporate e-cigarette policies into their existing smoke and tobacco-free hospital policies

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- Ripley-Moffitt C, Viera AJ, Goldstein AO, et al. Influence of a tobacco-free hospital campus policy on smoking status of hospital employees. *Am J Health Promot* 2010;25:e25-8.

