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**Abstract**

**Title:** An exploration of e-cigarette use among current and former African American college students.

**Rationale:**

Emerging research on e-cigarettes/vaping, is attempting to understand the effects on the mental health of college students (Truth Initiative, 2024). There is a gap in the research regarding whether or not a subgroup of the African American community, students currently attending or who formerly attended higher education institutions, use e-cigarettes. This study will explore the experiences of African American students to determine their level of use and if it can be attributed to anxiety and depression.

**Objective:** To determine e-cigarette use for African American students who currently or formerly attended higher education institutions.

**Design:** A qualitative research study of 100 current or former students:

- To collect and gather data exploring, understanding, and gaining knowledge about their feelings toward e-cigarettes.
  - Develop a survey and a questionnaire.
  - Use a survey and questionnaire:
    - survey 100 students.
    - questionnaire for 20 to 25 individual interviews with five (5) to ten (10) students in each of the five (5) in-person and virtual focus groups.

**Setting:** Higher education institutions and communities in Pulaski County. **Participants:** 100 African American current or former students. **Interventions:** To promote prevention, and intervention strategies that will decrease the spread or stop e-cigarette use.

**Measurements:**

- A Survey to explore two patterns:
  1. E-cigarette use.
  2. E-cigarette non-use.
- A questionnaire to gain opinions about e-cigarettes:
  - What are the patterns of use or non-use and reasons as they relate to their triggers and coping mechanisms (e.g. anxiety and depression)?

**Potential Limitations:** Students may not want to self-disclose or participate in the surveys.