Compared to placebo alone, nicotine gum, nicotine patch, and bupropion were each more effective than placebo in preventing relapse. The combination of nicotine patch plus gum or bupropion was the most effective of five pharmacologic therapies tested for smoking cessation milestones, according to a prospective trial of 1,504 smokers.

About 29% of smokers, aged 18-24, found that 29% of smokers aged 18-24 years used snus, tabag-like pouches of tobacco that are placed under the lip. Snus tend to appeal more to men than women and they appeal to young smokers, who are not planning to quit anytime soon, she observed.

“Snus may be old news for a lot of people, but we still don’t have a lot of information on them from a population standpoint,” Dr. Bienert said. For example “we don’t know how many teens went on to regular or repeated snus use,” she said, so “we do need some target research on youth and the use of this product.”

Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), or e-cigarettes, contain a battery, heating element, and nicotine that is sometimes flavored, explained Dr. Nathan Cobb of the Schroeder Institute for Tobacco Research and Policy Studies, a part of the American Legacy Foundation. They deliver nicotine to the mouth and lungs when sucked and emit a mist that resembles smoke, he said.

E-cigarettes are imported primarily from China and are available online and at mall kiosks, he said. Refill solutions contain up to 36 mg of nicotine.

Dr. Cobb said that he has policy concerns over such terms as ENDS, electronic cigarettes, and e-cigarettes because manufacturers might be seeking to evade classification as cigarettes. Still, “we can’t assume that the risks and harms are the same” as for cigarettes, he said. There may be significant safety risks associated with exposure to chemicals, and it has yet to be seen whether e-cigarettes can be employed in ways to help people with smoking cessation.

Data Lacking on Use of Snus, Cigarillos, E-Cigarettes

In a separate survey of 4,067 smokers conducted in eight cities, Lois Bienert, Ph.D., senior research fellow at the Center for Survey Research at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, found that 29% of smokers aged 18-24 years used snus, tabag-like pouches of tobacco that are placed under the lip. Snus tend to appeal more to men than women and they appeal to young smokers, who are not planning to quit anytime soon, she observed.

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Data Lacking on Use of Snus, Cigarillos, E-Cigarettes

BY HILLEL KUTTLER

BALTIMORE — Small cigars known as cigarillos, snus, and electronic nicotine delivery systems appeal to young people and are marketed to them, underscoring the need for far more data on their associated health risks, experts emphasized at the annual meeting of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco.

The lack of clarity in defining and classifying each product complicates government’s regulatory capability as well as efforts to educate smokers on the risks, said Jennifer Cullen, Ph.D., director of research at the American Legacy Foundation in Washington, an outreach and education organization created and funded by the 1998 tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.

Cigar use soared a 0.75% increase annually during 2002-2007 among non-Hispanic whites aged 18-24 years, according to Dr. Cullen’s analysis of data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Across all years in that age group, cigarillos were the most popular cigars. White and black non-Hispanic males showed the greatest prevalence of cigar smoking during the past 30 days. More research is needed on the factors that contribute to their popularity, she said.

About 29% of smokers, aged 18-24, used snus, according to a survey.