

**Potential health risks of hookah smoking are being overlooked by users,
concerning toxicologists**

Key Messages

- Hookah smoking is on the rise, while health effects are not fully understood.
- Hookah smoking can produce carcinogens and other chemicals associated with ill health at levels similar to or higher than cigarette smoking.
- Toxicologists, who study the adverse effects of chemicals, are concerned about public perception that hookah smoking is a safer alternative to other forms of tobacco use.

Reston, Va.; February 2, 2015 — Studies have shown that hookah smoking is on the rise among adolescents and young adults, which is a cause of concern for members of the Society of Toxicology (SOT).

“Researchers are finding that people perceive hookah smoking as a safer and healthier means of tobacco use. However, toxicological research is finding elements in hookah smoke that are well-established to cause adverse health effects,” says Norbert E. Kaminski, PhD, SOT President 2014–2015.

Studies show that hookah use is associated with potentially dangerous chemicals and health effects:

- Chemicals produced during one hookah smoking session of 45 to 60 minutes can equal those produced by smoking 10 or more cigarettes.
- Hookah use generates carcinogens, such as benzene, and has been linked to lung cancer and loss of lung function.
- Similar peak plasma nicotine levels, greater blood carbon monoxide levels, and much greater inhaled smoke volume were observed from exposure to hookah smoke compared to cigarette smoke.

“Developing comprehensive assessments of any substance’s health risks can take years of research,” says Dr. Kaminski, “but in the meantime, individuals using hookah water pipes need to be aware of the potential dangers that are already present.”

In its new issue statement on hookah smoking, the Society identifies many factors that could impact the health of hookah users, including the inhaled smoke and vapors; secondhand smoke and vapors; and emissions generated from the smoldering charcoal that is used in water pipes.

The complete issue statement is available on [the SOT website](#).

Experts are available for interviews upon request, as are infographics regarding hookah smoking.

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About SOT

Founded in 1961, the Society of Toxicology (SOT) is a professional and scholarly organization of more than 7,800 scientists from academic institutions, government, and industry representing the great variety of individuals who practice toxicology in the US and abroad. SOT is committed to creating a safer and healthier world by advancing the science of toxicology. The Society promotes the acquisition and utilization of knowledge in toxicology, aids in the protection of public health, and has a strong commitment to education in toxicology and to the recruitment of students and new members into the profession. For more information about SOT and toxicology, visit the Society online at www.toxicology.org, follow us on Twitter [@SOTtoxicology](https://twitter.com/SOTtoxicology), and [like us on Facebook](#).

Media Contact:

Michelle Werts
Society of Toxicology
703.438.3115 ext. 1640
michelle@toxicology.org