

# Researchers to Study Impact of Warning Labels on Florida's Young Hookah Users

Researchers at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine are working on a five-year study, funded by an Esther King Biomedical Research Program award from the Florida Department of Health, to study the impact of stronger health warning labels on waterpipes, also known as hookahs, in Florida.



A waterpipe, also known as a hookah.

Waterpipes have become a leading tobacco-use method in the U.S., possibly fueled by the widespread misperception that they are not as harmful as cigarettes. The goal of the study is to investigate whether placing pictorial health warning

labels on hookahs will be more effective than having no labels in increasing harm perception and intention to quit, as well as in reducing smoking satisfaction, intensity, and exposure to toxicants.

The study is a collaborative effort by a team from the Miller's School's Department of Public Health Sciences, led by Assistant Professor Taghrid Asfar, M.D., M.S.P.H., that is working with researchers at Florida International University, the Florida Tobacco-Free Workgroup, the University of Memphis, and the Food and Drug Administration, as well as tobacco control media and advocacy specialists and youth-oriented anti-tobacco campaigns experts.

"For the past decade, our team has been at the forefront of working together to provide evidence of the harmful and addictive potential of waterpipe smoking, as well as to elucidate its complex nature for regulatory and policy purposes," Dr. Asfar said.

## **Study seeks young participants**

Currently, they are recruiting participants 21 and older who will be asked to complete a brief, confidential survey and attend one focus group session through Zoom.

To advocate for the adoption of health warning label policies and disseminate knowledge about the harmful effects of waterpipe smoking, specifically toward youth, the team will also partner with the [Golin](#) public relations agency, the [Tobacco-Free Workgroup](#), which works to decrease tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke in Miami-Dade County, and the [Truth Initiative](#), an anti-smoking advocacy organization.

To participate in the study, contact Alejandra Casas, a research assistant at the Miller School, at (305) 243-0362 or [axc623@miami.edu](mailto:axc623@miami.edu). Eligible participants will be compensated up to \$66 for their time and effort.

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