

Flavored cigarettes still popular online despite US ban

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Continued interest surprises researchers.

(HealthDay)—Although banned in 2009 by the U.S. Food Administration, flavored cigarettes are still popular and available online, a new study finds.

Researchers from the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine monitored certain online search terms related to flavored [cigarettes](#) and cigars made by the company Djarum. Only the cigars are legal.

Among the first 50 search results for "Djarum cigarettes," 72 percent of websites promoted and 34 percent sold the illegal cigarettes, according to the study published June 17 in *Tobacco Control*.

The researchers noted there were also 291 percent more online searches for the company's illegal [flavored cigarettes](#) than its replacement cigars,

even five years after the ban was issued.

"We weren't surprised that the Web is being used to circumvent tobacco regulations," said the study's corresponding author, Jon-Patrick Allem, a postdoctoral fellow with the university's Tobacco Center of Regulatory Science. "Most surprising was the constant rate of interest in the illegal products [cigarettes] versus the legal products [cigars]," he said in a university news release.

The researchers recommended stronger enforcement, fines and taking down websites where flavored cigarettes are available.

"Using data from the Web to inform regulatory science is one of the goals for us here at USC moving forward," said Allem.

The study was funded by the U.S. National Cancer Institute.

More information: The American Lung Association provides more information on [flavored cigarettes](#).

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