Cigarette smoking among high school students is dropping—that’s the good news. But a new study published in *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, cautions hookah use among teens is rising dramatically, raising concern among health experts.

In a study of high school seniors, 18% of the 5,540 surveyed had used hookah at least once in the past 12 months.

Hookahs are water pipes with a smoke chamber, bowl, pipe and hose used to smoke specially made tobacco that comes in different flavors. They’re often shared by users in smoking sessions.

Youth and young adults often think they are safer than smoking cigarettes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). But hookah smoking has many of the same health risks as cigarette smoking.

A 40 to 45-minute session using a water pipe is the equivalent of smoking 40 cigarettes at one sitting, said Janelle Middents, Area Director for the American Lung Association in Florida.

Researchers, who found the students most likely to use a hookah had parents with higher levels of education and higher incomes, concluded it was important for educators and public health officials to help the public understand the dangers of hookah use.

The Essex-Passaic Wellness Coalition (web.njms.rutgers.edu/EPWC) and the Clifton Health Department are working to educate our communities about the hazards of hookah use. Read more information on Hookah and Health in future issues of this magazine.