Author’s response to reviews

Title: Recurrent spontaneous pneumothoraces and vaping in an 18-year-old male: a case report and review of the literature

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Author’s response to reviews:

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Re: Response to Reviewers

We appreciate the reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions, with 3 positive reviews and 1 constructive review. We have modified the manuscript accordingly and incorporated the changes in the revised text (yellow highlights). We believe these updates substantially improve the case report compared to the initial submission.

Reviewer #1

1) I believe that it [informed consent] should be stated if it is necessary for the journal.

Response: We have updated the manuscript to include the statement “written informed consent was provided by the patient to submit this case report”.

Reviewer #2

1) In the discussion section, the Authors go into a depth analysis of the potential pathophysiologic mechanisms underlying the onset of pneumothorax in vapers. Although interesting, this part of the discussion is a little bit dispersive, and the Authors should revise it focusing on the target.

Response: We thank the reviewer for the constructive comment. We modified the discussion to highlight that we are hypothesizing a potential mechanism underlying the pathophysiology presented.

2) The potential effect of marijuana use as a cause of pneumothorax in the present patient should be underlined.

Response: We have added to the discussion to emphasize the possibility that marijuana use reported by the patient may contribute to the development of spontaneous pneumothorax (lines 156-167). It should be noted that while the patient has a history of marijuana use, only electronic cigarettes were between recurrent episodes.
3) I want to ask the Authors why a surgical treatment to prevent recurrences has not been proposed to the patient during his second hospital stay.

Response: Surgical treatment was offered after the second occurrence, but he declined this treatment (line 110-111).

Reviewer #3

1) This case report cannot associate the vaping with spontaneous pneumothorax since it is only a case report. In my opinion it would be scientifically wrong to associate vaping with spontaneous pneumothorax. As the authors said the spontaneous pneumothorax is associated with the mechanic forces of inhalation. Especially in this case which showed apical lung blebs.

Response: A case report does not establish causality; thus, we report a correlation in our patient between electronic cigarette use and recurrent pneumothoraces. Therefore, we hypothesize a potential risk factor that warrants future investigation. We have updated the manuscript to emphasize correlation and the need for further studies.

2) The author should perform a retrospective study or prospective analysis of multiple patients with three cohorts: non-smokers, smokers and patients using electronic cigarettes in order to be able to evaluate any possible association of vaping with spontaneous pneumothorax.

Response: We agree with the proposed approach, but believe it is beyond the scope of the current case report to perform this clinical trial. A retrospective study would be under-powered because use of electronic cigarettes (or vaping) is not adequately captured in our electronic medical record as of yet.

Reviewer #4

1) Very well done. Complete and comprehensive. Useful evidence for alternative smoking devices effects.

Response: We thank the reviewer for their kind comments.