



Tobacco smoking and tobacco cessation in 2019

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The annual OFDT overview of the “tobacco review” brings together different key indicators on sales in the tobacconist retailer network, data on the treatments and the use of tobacco cessation services¹. It provides a summarised overview of developments over the course of the last year. The 2019 edition describes the repercussions of successive rises in prices of tobacco in the tobacconist network and the continuous increase of the number of people following a treatment to stop smoking (thanks to nicotine substitutes for almost all of them). These elements are completed by a report of the results of public surveys carried out in 2019 which witnessed a drop in smoking.

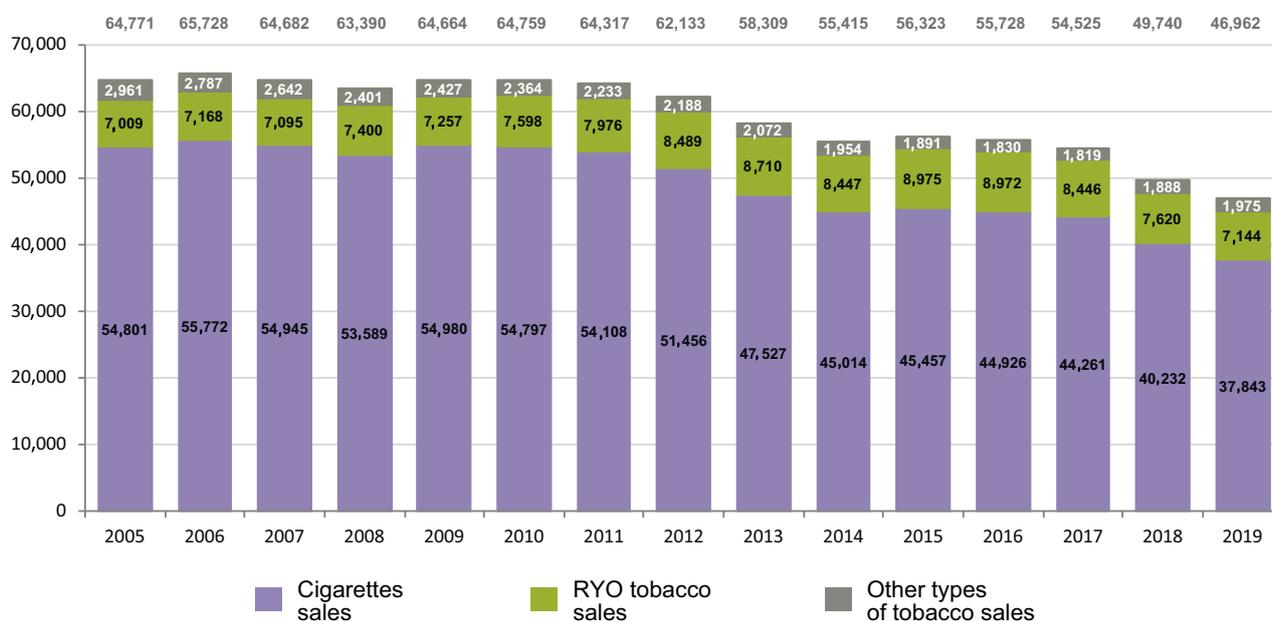
The [annual 2019 report](#), only available in French, can be found online on the OFDT website, as well as a [summary in English of the 2018 overview](#).

SALES OF CIGARETTES FALL BELOW 40 000 TONNES

Following two new prices increases (in March and then in November 2019) having raised the average annual price of a pack of cigarettes of the best-selling brand to 8.78 euros, the amount of sales of cigarettes in the tobacconist network sits at 37 843 tonnes. On a constant number of delivery days, the drop in cigarette sales (80% of tobacco volumes sold) was 7.1% in metropolitan France. In 20 years, the volumes of cigarettes sold in the tobacconist network have been more than halved and these volumes have dropped by more than 15 000 tonnes compared to 2010. Roll-your-own (RYO) tobacco (around 15% of tobacco volumes) has decreased by 6.3% in 2019. Sales of other types of tobacco (cigars, cigarillos, pipe tobacco, snuff and chewing tobacco, etc.) increased by 4.2% on a constant daily basis, in connection with a much lower level of taxation. On the whole, the total number of tobacco sales are 46 962 tonnes and the decrease in volumes sold in the French tobacconist network reaches 6.6%. This decrease is greater in bordering French departments, which most likely reflects an increase in cross-border purchases. The overall turnover for tobacco products is rising again under the effect of price increases thus reaching 19.4 billion euros in 2019, a 2.5% increase compared to 2018.



Total tobacco sales (in tonnes) and distribution among cigarettes, roll-your-own (RYO) tobacco and other types of tobacco (source: DGDDI)



Note: Data for continental France (Corsica not included) from 2005-2018, Metropolitan France (Corsica included) from 2019.

1. Sales figures are provided by the French Customs Authority (DGDDI) and data on smoking cessation treatments by the Group for the Production and Elaboration of Statistics (GERS). The figures relating to the Tobacco Information Service (TIS) telephone helpline/website and #MoisSansTabac are provided by *Santé publique France*, the French National Public Health Agency.

In addition, 17 298 seizures were made in 2019 (7% more than in 2018), representing more than 360 tonnes in volume of tobacco compared to 241 tonnes in 2018. These trends result from a significant drop from 10 to 4 cartons of the quantitative limit for importing cigarettes from another EU Member State and the implementation of the traceability and security system for tobacco products at a European level since 20 May 2019. The traceability device materialises by a code allowing a tobacco product to be tracked from its production factory to the retail seller, while the security device consists of a label guaranteeing the authenticity of a tobacco product on the territory.

INITIATIVES TO HELP QUIT SMOKING HAVE REACHED AN UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL

For the third consecutive year, sales of treatments to help quit smoking have rocketed, especially due to their 65% reimbursement by Health Insurance. They now correspond to almost 4.3 million equivalent “treated patients” that is one third more than in 2018. Transdermal patch sales represent almost 50% of the market, just in front of oral substitutes (45%). As far as preventative actions are concerned, the fourth edition of the collective challenge #MoisSansTabac [Month without tobacco] in November 2019 was responsible for nearly half of the mobile application downloads from www.tabac-info-service.fr.



With regard to the use of the Tobacco Information Service telephone helpline, calls handled by tobacco specialists exceeded first-level calls (down slightly). Finally, the number of calls from smokers 6 months after their first interview increased to almost 10 000.

A SIGNIFICANT DROP IN THE NUMBER OF SMOKERS AND AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF VAPERS IN 2018

A net decreasing trend from the prevalence of daily smoking occurred in 2017 and settled at around 30% in the adult French population between 2000 and 2016. The results from the 2018 Health Barometer survey from the French National Public Health Agency *Santé publique France* confirm this development. The prevalence of daily smoking has since dropped from 26.9% in 2017 to 25.4% among adults aged between 18 and 75 years old. These decreases were observed for both men and women (28.2% of men and 22.9% of women were daily smokers in 2018). These decreases were also observed across social backgrounds, even if those who are considered underprivileged (job seekers, people with little to no qualifications, low salaries) have consistently higher prevalence than those with more advantaged professions and of higher social classes.



A decline in the use of substances by all secondary school students emerges from the National health and substances survey among adolescents in middle and high school regarding their health and substances (EnCLASS², combining HBSC³ and ESPAD⁴): in 2018, less than one-fifth of secondary school students said they were daily smokers (17.5 %), compared with nearly a quarter (23.2 %) in 2015.

2. For an overview of the prevalence's of experimentation and use of the three most widely used substances during adolescence (alcohol, tobacco and cannabis), by school grade, please go to: <https://en.ofdt.fr/publications/tendances/alcohol-tobacco-and-cannabis-use-among-school-students-2018-tendances-132-june-2019/>

3. For more on the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey in France, please go to: <https://en.ofdt.fr/surveys/hbsc/>

4. For more on the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs in France, please go to: <https://en.ofdt.fr/surveys/espac/>

In comparison, the number of electronic cigarette users continues to grow: among adults, 3.8% are daily vapers in 2018 compared to 2.7% in 2017. The EnCLASS results show a net increase in those trying the electronic cigarette, representing nearly one third of students in their last two years of High School in 2018 (32.0%) and more than half of those at a Lycée [the equivalent to six form students in the UK] (52.1%, that's 57.2% of boys and 47.1% of girls). Students at a Lycée trying the electronic cigarette have increased by 17 points compared to 2015. Use in the last month among this group of students also increased from 10.0% to 16.6% over three years.



CONCLUSION

The French market has seen a steep drop in sales and should be impacted in 2020 by more price rises (50 cents in March, making a pack of the most popular brand of cigarettes cost 10 euros, then a 40 cents rise in November). This drop in sales was offset by a decline in the prevalence of smoking and an increase in all indicators relating to stopping smoking. Additionally, the ban on all references to mentholated cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco in the tobacconist network will be effective from 20 May for all manufacturers and will apply to the whole of the European Union.

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