

The ban on sales of alcohol and tobacco to minors



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The Hospital, Patients, Health and Territories (French) law of July 21, 2009 (the so-called «HPST law») established a ban on the sale of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products to all minors. The prior regulations had banned the sale of alcoholic beverages and tobacco to minors under the age of 16. By expanding the restrictions to minors aged 16-17, legislators hoped to provide a firm response to the risks related to recent trends in alcohol consumption («massive alcohol abuse») and tobacco smoking among adolescents. In addition, these legislative provisions fall within the scope of guidelines issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which recommends implementing validated public health strategies, including banning the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors. The National Health Directorate (DGS) commissioned the French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (OFDT) to conduct an evaluation of how the ban on sales to minors was being implemented and what the impact of the ban was on prevalence and accessibility. To do this, the OFDT used several existing surveys and conducted two ad hoc studies. This issue of Tendances provides a summary of the key results of this assessment.

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