

# Alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use during "the collège years" in 2014



Tendances n° 106, OFDT, 6 p.  
December 2015

This new version of the French results of the most recent international "Health Behaviour in School-aged Children" survey (HBSC) specifically sheds light on the introduction to psychoactive substances among the younger generations aged 11 to 15. It provides an opportunity to identify the school ages in which the very first instances of use begin, and those in which this use develops and intensifies. This issue of Tendances provides up-to-date figures on the levels of tobacco, alcohol and cannabis use in collège years in 2014, examining the changes in these practices since 2010. It is also an opportunity to broach electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) and shisha use among collège pupils, for the first time.

Authors :

Stanislas Spilka, Virginie Ehlinger, Olivier Le Nézet, Dibia Pacoricona, Marcus Ngantcha, Emmanuelle Godeau

 [Download](#) the PDF file (693 Ko)

The French results of the 2014 HBSC survey highlight a few key trends:

- Lifetime use, such as recent alcohol use, appears to be in marked decline in 2014. It nonetheless confirms the pre-eminence of alcohol in adolescence which is the first psychoactive substance tried by collège pupils, with already half of lifetime users in 6e (11-12 year olds).
- The first drunkenness, occurring at a later stage, also appear to be less frequent than in 2010.
- Tobacco, for which lifetime use in collège is still less widespread than for alcohol, shows the least gender-based differences although lifetime use is now lower and daily smoking begins later among girls than for boys, compared to 2010.
- Lifetime use of cannabis remained stable compared to 2010. While still very rare among younger pupils (11-13 years), it still shows strong growth through the collège years, affecting nearly one in four 3e pupils (14-15 year olds) in 2014.
- Lifetime use of shisha (hookah) observed among collège pupils, quantified for the first time, shows that this method of use is very popular among adolescents.
- Electronic cigarette use mainly concerns cigarette smokers, like in the adult population.

The 2014 HBSC survey reinforces the lessons drawn from the 2010 survey. The collège years are still a key period for the lifetime use of psychoactive substances, with major variations between one year and the next.

The 2014 findings confirm that substance use behaviour is not starting increasingly early as initiation seems to be taking place even slightly later than a few years ago. These results, observed in a collège setting, at the beginning of adolescence, may correspond to a delay in lifetime use or, on the contrary, foreshadow a real change in behaviour with regard to psychoactive substances among part of this new generation.