

In a glimpse

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Alcohol consumption and its consequences in France in 2021

This report from the French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (OFDT) provides an overview of the supply, uses, and the social and health consequences of alcohol consumption in France in 2021.

The first part details changes in the market, taxation, prices, and amounts of alcohol consumed in France. The second part describes the consequences of alcohol in terms of user care and road safety. The data for 2021 are put into perspective with those for 2019 and 2020 (a year marked by the exceptional measures taken to curb the Covid-19 outbreak, which produced significant effects on the supply and consequences of alcohol consumption).

The amount of alcohol sold in France in 2021 was around 6 million hectolitres of pure alcohol (PA), of which 54% was wine, 23% was beer, and 21% was spirits (which nevertheless contributed the most to tax revenue). In relation to the French population, this amount represents a consumption of 10.5 litres of pure alcohol per inhabitant aged 15 and over, or the equivalent of 2.3 standard glasses of alcohol per day.

These figures are averages and do not reflect the distribution of quantities between consumers and non-consumers in 2021 (in the absence of new epidemiological data for the adult population). Among teenagers, the results of the 2021 OFDT's EnCLASS survey showed that alcohol is the most widely used psychoactive substance, even though the proportion of students aged 14-15 who have never drunk was the lowest observed since 2010. However, 1 in 6 students (16.4%) say they have experienced a drunken episode in their lives (a similar proportion to 2018), and 10.4% say they have been drunk at least once in the past year. The OFDT's ARAMIS 2 qualitative survey, carried out from 2020 to 2021, confirmed that alcohol played an important role in the social lives of young people, and that perceptions of risk continue to focus on the immediate consequences of consumption (loss of self-control, risk of accident, etc.).

In terms of healthcare use, hospital stays with a main diagnosis related to alcohol have decreased by 7.6% in 2021 compared with 2019 (41.4 stays per 10 000 inhabitants aged 15 and over in 2021, compared with 44.8 stays in 2019). This change is mainly due to a reduction in stays for acute intoxication. There was also a drop in stays for long-term effects of alcoholism between 2019 and 2021 (6.1 stays in 2021 compared with 6.8 in 2019). This is mainly due to the decrease in stays for alcohol-related liver diseases, which fell from 19 600 to 18 300 between 2019 and 2021. The number of patients receiving treatment for alcohol dependence fell by 6.8% between 2019 and 2021 (-3.2% for nalmefene and 10.2% for naltrexone¹).

Further reading (in French)

The overview report [Consommation d'alcool et ses conséquences en France en 2021](#), 9 p.

¹ Nalmefene and naltrexone act to counteract opioid receptors in the brain, reducing the desire to drink.