



Tobacco smoking and tobacco cessation in 2015

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February 2016

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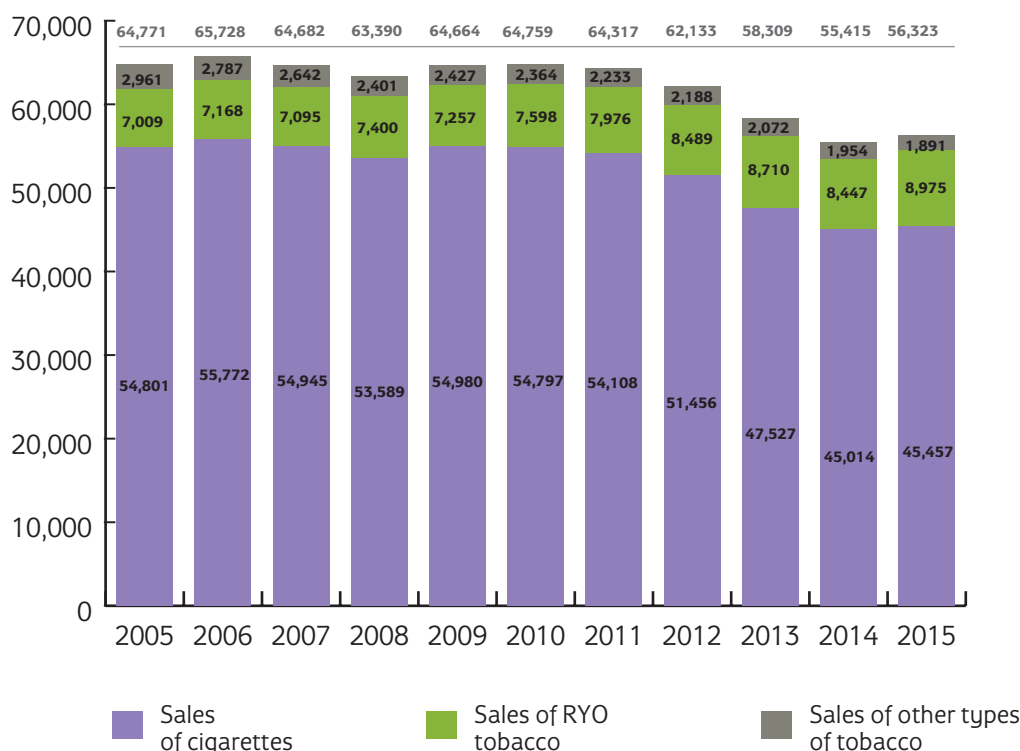
The annual report concerning the review on tobacco¹ offers a concise overview of the changes in the main indicators related to tobacco sales and the support of smokers, together with prevention and information actions in the past year.

FIRST RISE IN TOBACCO RETAILER SALES SINCE 2010

In 2015, tobacco sales in mainland France reached 56,323 tonnes, i.e. a 1.6 % rise compared to 2014 (see graph). This is the first year tobacco sales have risen since 2010. This rise takes place in a context where tobacco prices have not been revalued since January 2014, and the e-cigarette market is slowing.

Cigarette sales, accounting for approximately 80 % of the market, have shown a marked increase (+ 1 %), for the first time since 2009. Sales of roll-your-own (RYO) tobacco, reaching 8,975 tonnes, have also recovered (+ 6.3 %), after declining in 2014. The market share for this type of tobacco is continuing to grow: 15.9 % vs. 15.2 % in 2014. Although the price of tobacco did not increase in 2015, some smokers continued to switch to RYO tobacco, which is still better value compared to cigarettes. Sales of other types of tobacco (cigars, cigarillos, etc.) fell by 3.2 %, confirming the steady decline reported since 2010 (- 20 % in total).

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



1. The review on tobacco and tobacco smoking indicators in France brings together recent figures which vary in nature and origin, presents them as a concise overview, and publishes them within a short time-frame. The review on tobacco has been drawn up monthly by the OFDT since April 2004. Click [here](#) for the different issues of the «Review on tobacco» (documents in French).

STABLE CROSS-BORDER PURCHASES

To highlight the variations in tobacco purchased abroad by French smokers, the changes in French border sales can be compared with national sales.

In 2015, sales of RYO tobacco increased as much and even more than the national average in the vast majority of border departments. As regards cigarettes, sales increased more than the national average in departments bordering Spain (+ 1.4 %), Italy (+ 1.8 %) and Switzerland (+ 3.9 %). In areas bordering Germany and Luxembourg, the trends are identical to those observed on a national scale. Only departments bordering Belgium experienced a decline in tobacco sales (- 0.6 %). Cross-border purchases thus appeared to stabilise in 2015, and even decline at certain borders.



RISE IN SALES FOR TOBACCO CESSATION TREATMENTS

In 2015, 1,825,779 individuals used tobacco cessation treatments², i.e. 13.5 % more than in 2014, after two years in decline, largely attributed to e-cigarettes. Users may perceived the latter as a means of withdrawal, delaying recourse to «conventional» treatments. However, this reversal in trends has not reached the level observed at the start of 2010 (- 23 % relative to 2012).

Following appreciable evolutions in market shares in 2014, few changes are observed in 2015: oral nicotine replacement therapies account for 63 % of treated patients, patches 32 %, and medications (Champix® and Zyban®) barely 3 %, with the remainder being divided between inhalers and the Nicorette® mouth spray.

Nearly 183,000 individuals benefited from partial coverage by the French National Health Insurance Fund (up to €50 per person per year, or indeed €150 for populations considered a priority) of nicotine replacement therapies prescribed by a physician or midwife, vs 158,888 in 2014.

MORE PATIENTS VISITING SMOKING CESSATION SERVICES

Each month, on average, smoking cessation services saw 13.6 new patients for tobacco withdrawal, primarily referred by a health professional (59 %), and treated 23.2 patients for the same reason.

USE OF THE QUITLINE GENERALLY INCREASED, DRIVEN BY TOBACCO CESSATION COACHING

The telephone quitline (*Tabac info service* or TIS) handled 32,557 calls relating to tobacco cessation (vs 32,641 in 2014) and more than 40,000 calls were handled by tobacco treatment specialists working with the service (vs 39,000 in 2014) for individual support of smokers.

Furthermore, the website www.tabac-info-service.fr received nearly 2.5 million visits, i.e. a 10 % fall compared to 2014. Nevertheless, this decline seems rather to indicate a change in smoker habits (as for the rest of the population), who tend to favour their smartphones. The tobacco cessation coaching app (launched in January 2015) has recruited 248,800 smokers in total, i.e. 13 times more than in 2014, when this service was only available via the website.



2. The number of treated patients is estimated based on the sales of these medications, in quantities of 60 Zyban® or Champix® tablets, 30 patches or 300 oral forms, over an average treatment duration of one month (taking into account early failures).

CONCLUSION

For the first time since 2010, French tobacco retailer sales have risen considerably, in a context where tobacco prices were not increased in France in 2015, and cross-border purchases generally appeared stable.

Without recent data on the prevalence of tobacco smoking, it is difficult to conclude as to an increase in the number of smokers, although this cannot be completely ruled out. This could also stem from renewed individual use among smokers, related to the declining appeal of e-cigarettes. This relative loss of interest could also explain the considerable increase in tobacco cessation initiatives (tobacco cessation treatments, visits to smoking cessation services, calls to the quitline and registration via the app for tobacco cessation coaching) compared to 2014.

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Graphic designer: Frédérique Million (OFDT)
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