



Summary

For the past 100 years, tobacco use in Sweden has been largely dominated by use of cigarettes and snus. Cigarettes were at their most popular after the Second World War. Since then, use has decreased at a steady pace and is now at a historically low level. Snus was popular in the early 1900s, after which use gradually decreased to a record low in the 1960s. Since then, use has increased again. During the past decade, the landscape in the tobacco area has changed greatly. There has been a large change whereby new, tobacco-free nicotine products, such as all white snus and vapes, have started to make up a larger share of use. Overall, tobacco and nicotine use have therefore increased in the last ten years.

In tandem with the decrease in tobacco smoking, the associated harms have decreased. For instance, fewer people are dying from lung cancer. The occurrence of COPD is also decreasing. Further, fewer people state that they are negatively impacted by the smoking of their next of kin. As regards the health-related risks of snus, they are smaller than the health-related risks of smoking. However, there are documented risks. High consumption of snus has been shown to increase the risks of dying after myocardial infarction, getting type II diabetes, and likely also increases the risk of certain forms of cancer. As regards vaping, this is such a new phenomenon that the long-term effects remain unknown. The same applies to all white snus. However, both all white snus and vapes (usually) contain nicotine. Nicotine is addictive and can in the short term affect the heart and blood vessels by raising blood pressure and impairing vascular function.

In Sweden, the availability of tobacco and nicotine is generally high. The availability of the more traditional tobacco products – cigarettes and tobacco snus – has decreased somewhat. For instance, the number of sales points for tobacco has decreased, as have travellers' imports and smuggled tobacco. At the same time, the price of tobacco has increased dramatically over the past 20 years. Among youths, a smaller proportion now state that they have bought cigarettes themselves or could get access to cigarettes within 24 hours. However, availability of the new nicotine products has increased. Sales points for e-cigarettes and other tobacco-free nicotine products, for which no sales licence is required, have increased in number. Financial availability is also higher, as tobacco-free nicotine products are not taxed as highly as tobacco products. In summary, this suggests that the availability of traditional tobacco products has decreased while the availability of the new nicotine products has increased.

As regards gender differences in usage, tobacco use has historically been more common among men. When smoking cigarettes grew popular after the Second World War, this was primarily among men, with women starting to smoke only later. However, since the late 1970s, smoking has decreased among both men



and women. There are currently no significant gender differences. Among school-aged children, however, smoking is still more common in girls. Larger gender differences are seen for snus, where male use has long been dominant. During the most recent ten-year-period, snus use has increased primarily among women. Thus, the gender differences have decreased. Looking specifically at all white snus, the gender differences are basically nil. For vaping, the gender differences are not as clear. However, overall, it remains more common for men to use tobacco or nicotine.

Consumption is also most common in the younger part of the population. The proportions of both smokers, snus users and vapers are highest among secondary school students and young adults aged 17–29 years. This is particularly the case for all white snus, for which use is three times more common among young adults than in other age groups. In particular, it is common to use tobacco or nicotine occasionally, whereas daily smoking, for instance, is more common in older age groups.

As regards social differences, these are obvious in smoking. Historically, smoking was common in the upper class. However, the decrease has not been equal across all societal groups, which has led to an inversion of this pattern. For instance, it is much more common with daily smoking among people with shorter education, low income, who are jobseekers, and among those born in a foreign country. Further, it is more common with smoking among youths who do not enjoy school, cut classes often, have many psychosomatic symptoms, or go to schools with a small proportion of students with highly educated parents. For snus, the societal differences are not as obvious.

There are also differences in use between different regions in Sweden, and between different countries. As regards the regional differences, these are largest for snus use. Snus use is generally more common in the northern parts of the country, and in rural municipalities and regions with lower population density. Smoking does not show equally clear geographic differences. The regions with the largest shares of smokers often vary from year to year. In an international perspective, Sweden stands out with a significantly lower level of smokers than most other European countries. However, if snus use is included, Sweden is at a more similar level of tobacco consumption.

Lastly, it was investigated if it is more common that tobacco/nicotine users also drink alcohol, use illicit drugs or gamble for money. The results are clear. It is much more common among smokers and snus users than among others to use other substances and to gamble for money. This is seen among both youths and the adult population. The correlation between smoking and illicit drug use was the clearest. In other words, it is much more common among smokers to use illicit drugs than it is among non-smokers.