

# Summary

The total alcohol consumption of the Swedish population has decreased since the middle of the 00s. Among teenagers, consumption levels are at an all time low. Men drink more alcohol than women, but the gender difference in self-reported alcohol consumption has decreased. The proportion of the population that has tried narcotic drugs has been relatively stable during the 00s after an increase in the previous decade. However, there are signs that use of narcotics has intensified among young adults, and the indicators that reflect the more serious forms of drug use suggest that the situation is deteriorating. Sniffing and use of doping substances is relatively rare in Sweden, and no major changes have been observed in the 00s. Tobacco consumption has decreased in Sweden in the 00s.

## Trends in alcohol

The availability of alcohol has increased over time in terms of the number of licences to serve alcohol and state liquor stores. The price of alcohol has varied over time but retail prices have risen in the past few years. The time series for the price of alcohol at licenced premises is relatively short, 2007–2014, but during that period, spirits, wine, and strong beer have all become more expensive.

Between the peak year of 2004 and 2015, total alcohol consumption decreased by about 1.4 litres of pure alcohol per person aged fifteen or older. Nonetheless, total consumption in 2015 was about 0.4 litres higher than in 2001. Men drink more alcohol than women, but over time, the difference between men's and women's self-reported alcohol consumption has narrowed. The alcohol consumption of students in their ninth school year increased during the 1990s until the early 00s (boys) or the mid-00s (girls). Since then, consumption has decreased among both genders. Data on alcohol consumption among students in their eleventh school year are available from 2004; these also show declining consumption among both boys and girls since the mid-00s.

Alcohol-related DALYs have fallen overall in Sweden in recent decades. In recent years, nearly 6% of the Swedish population are estimated to be either dependent on or abuse alcohol. On average, nearly 19% of the drivers killed in traffic accidents during the past decade had blood alcohol levels exceeding the legal limit. Alcohol-related violence (the number of reported assaults outdoors

where the perpetrator was unknown to the victim) increased between 2000 and 2007, then declined through 2015. Women and men treated for alcohol-related diagnoses generally increased between 2000 and 2012, then dropped through 2015. Alcohol-related mortality increased among both men and women in the 1970s, then decreased sharply among men. Men's mortality was considerably lower in 2015 than in the late 1970s. However, from the end of the 1970s until 2015, there were temporary increases in male mortality, for example in the early 1990s and mid-00s. From the late 00s, however, men's mortality generally decreased until 2013. Alcohol-related mortality among men was higher in 2014 and 2015 than in 2013. Among women, the changes in alcohol related mortality over time are less clear. Nonetheless, a clear increase can be seen in the 1970s, a gradual increase during the 1990s to the mid 00s, and a slight decline in the late 00s until about 2013. However, in 2014 and 2015, mortality among women was higher than in 2013

Among adults in Sweden (from age 15 years), total alcohol consumption is under the European average. The same applies to the proportion of drinkers and binge drinkers among Swedish students in their ninth school year.

## Trends in illicit drugs

The segment of the population who have tried illicit drugs has remained relatively unchanged during the 2000s, after a rise in the previous decade. However, there are indications of that drug use may have intensified somewhat among young adults. In 2016, 17% of 18-year-old students in secondary school reported that they tried drugs at some time; 13% had used drugs in the past 12 months, and 3% had done so 20 times or more. Compared with data from Europe and the United States, for example, illicit drug use among teenagers, as well as adults, is relatively uncommon in Sweden. In the latest ESPAD survey (from 2015) among European 16-year-old students, Sweden ranked sixth from last of a total of 35 European countries in terms of cannabis use over the past 30 days.

Serious drug use also increased during the 1990s. The most problematic types of drug use are more difficult to measure than casual use, but available indicators such as hospitalisation statistics, cause of death statistics and crime statistics suggest that the situation has deteriorated somewhat further in the 2000s. Available statistics indicate that the proportion of problematic users in Sweden is about the same as the European average, but that the mortality rate is considerably higher in Sweden. However, it is difficult to make this type of international comparison because of differences in how this type of information is collected in different countries.

## Trends in inhalants

It is clear that in Sweden, the use of inhalants is mainly prevalent among people in their early teens. The percentage who have used inhalants has decreased since the turn of the millennium and was around 3% among Swedish students in 2016. Sniffing has also gone down in the United States, where the decline began back in the mid-1990s. According to the ESPAD survey among 16-year-old students in Europe, sniffing levels have been relatively stable in Europe, and levels in Sweden fall somewhere in the middle.

## Trends in doping

Few Swedes have used hormonal doping drugs such as anabolic androgenic steroids. According to population-wide surveys, less than 1% have done so, and most of them are young or middle-aged men. Use of doping substances outside elite athletics became more common in the 1990s and now a rather limited group has become established whose main objective in using these substances is not to attain advantages in sports.

## Trends in tobacco

Unlike many other countries, where tobacco consumption mainly takes the form of cigarette smoking, tobacco use in Sweden involves two main products: cigarettes and moist snuff.

Concerning the availability of tobacco in Sweden, data about tobacco price changes in relation to consumer buying power since 2000 show decreased availability of tobacco in the 2000s owing to increased index prices. Data from 2006 and onward indicate that the physical accessibility of tobacco has also decreased in terms of the number of tobacco retail outlets per capita.

Both the sales statistics and the surveys of consumption habits described in this report's chapters on tobacco show that tobacco consumption has been declining in Sweden for a long time, mainly because daily smoking has decreased in the population. This decline is seen in both genders, but is strongest among men. Since the mid-1990s, daily smoking has been more common among women than men in Sweden, which is unusual from an international perspective. In general, smoking is less common in Sweden than in other EU countries. In the most recent nationwide public health survey, carried out by the Public Health Agency of Sweden in 2016, about 8% of men and 10% of women said they smoked every day.

In most countries, a larger proportion of men than women uses tobacco in the form of cigarette use. In Sweden, however, tobacco consumption also includes

use of snuff, which is significantly more common among men than among women in the country. When the total percentage of tobacco consumers (those who smoke and/or use snuff) is compared between the sexes, the pattern in Sweden is normal, with a higher percentage of tobacco consumers among men. Snuff use has not been studied as continuously as smoking in Sweden, but the available data indicate that snuff use increased during the 1990s and continued to increase somewhat until 2004, when regular studies of snuff use in the population began. Since then the extent of snuff use has been relatively stable. Most of the men and women who use snuff do so on a daily basis. In the 2016 survey, about 18% of men and 4% of women in the population used snuff daily.

Among students in their ninth school year (i.e. those who will turn 16 during the survey year), the percentage of tobacco consumers has declined over a long period; in the 2000s, the percentage of ninth-year students who smoke or use snuff has fallen by half. Among those participated in the Swedish survey of students in their eleventh school year (those who turn 18 during the year of the survey), tobacco use has not declined to the same extent as among ninth-year students. For several years after 2004, when this age group was first included in the survey, the proportion of 17-to-18-year-olds who used tobacco was relatively stable, but surveys from the past 5–6 years show that the percentage of eleventh-year girls who consume tobacco has decreased, and in the two most recent surveys, a decrease among eleventh-year boys has also been seen.

In summary, tobacco consumption has declined significantly in Sweden during the past few decades. The number of men who die of lung cancer has long been declining, whereas it has increased among women in Sweden. The most recent data show that slightly fewer women died of lung cancer in 2015 than the year before, and hopefully a peak has been reached also among women. However, tobacco consumption still underlies a substantial proportion of the disease burden in Sweden. According to the latest comparisons, tobacco caused about 8% of the disease burden in the country, which is more than twice the disease burden caused by alcohol and narcotics.