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## **The tobacco consumption of Swiss adolescents and young adults in 2001 to 2010**

Factsheet of the research report 2011

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Tobacco Monitoring Switzerland –  
Swiss Survey of Tobacco Consumption



*Reference:*

Radtke, T., Keller, R., Krebs, H. & Hornung, R. (2011). *Der Tabakkonsum Jugendlicher und junger Erwachsener in den Jahren 2001 bis 2010. Tabakmonitoring – Schweizerische Umfrage zum Tabakkonsum*. Zürich: Psychologisches Institut der Universität Zürich, Sozial- und Gesundheitspsychologie.

### **Tobacco Monitoring Switzerland (TMS) - Swiss Survey of Tobacco Consumption**

The TMS was developed on behalf of the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health by the Department of Psychology, Social and Health Psychology, University of Zurich (Prof. Dr. Rainer Hornung, Dr. Roger Keller and Dr. Theda Radtke) and Hans Krebs, Kommunikation und Publikumsforschung, Zurich. The data collections were conducted by LINK International Research and Consulting, Lucerne. Since 2004 the Tobacco Monitoring Switzerland was funded by the Tobacco Prevention Fund.

The Tobacco Monitoring Switzerland (TMS) was a representative, continuous survey of tobacco consumption among 14- to 65-year-olds in Switzerland. Since January 2001, four times a year a new sample of 2 500 persons was taken (i.e. 10 000 participants annually). The survey was conducted using standardized telephone interviews in German, French and Italian.

The research instrument consisted of a basic module and several add-on modules. The basic module served as a means of collecting key data on tobacco consumption (e.g. type and frequency of tobacco consumption, willingness to cease smoking) and on demographics. These questions were asked in every survey wave. The add-on modules could be added to the basic module for one or more survey wave (e.g. questions on second-hand smoke, harm reduction).

In the Tobacco Monitoring Survey sampling was done using a two-stage random-random sampling technique (random selection at the household and person levels). In order to have a sufficient number of people in some characteristic groups that are small but important for tobacco prevention (young people, pregnant women and mothers of small children), 14-24 year old men and women 14-44 years of age were oversampled. Residents of the French- and Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland were also overrepresented in the sample in order to ensure a sufficiently large sample for each language region in Switzerland. The 2 500 telephone interviews, conducted four times per year, were made up of 1 426 interviews in the German-speaking region, 711 interviews in the French-speaking region and 363 interviews in the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland. After the plausibility check, the weighting of the data followed. The weighting corrects distortions in the sample, so that it correctly represents the population.

The Tobacco Monitoring Switzerland data collection ended in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010. Beginning in January 2011, the data collection concerning tobacco consumption is conducted within the framework of Suchtmonitoring Schweiz, a survey that assesses epidemiological data concerning the problematic use of other addictive substances (e.g. alcohol, cannabis, pharmaceutical drugs) and other addictions (e.g. internet addiction).

For further information please visit our homepage: [www.tabakmonitoring.ch](http://www.tabakmonitoring.ch).

This factsheet contains selected information about the smoking behaviour and its development of Swiss 14- to 19-year-old adolescents. Additionally, information is given concerning the estimated future smoking behaviour, the smoking behaviour of friends and family, reasons for and against smoking, the image of smokers and non-smokers, the addressing of smoking in class, the purchase of tobacco, tobacco marketing catered to adolescents, as well as the estimation of the hazardous nature of different substances.

The results are based on two different samples:

In order to obtain a sufficiently large sample the data from 2009 and 2010 were accumulated. This allows for smaller statistical error margins in small subsamples. Therefore, a sample of 2843 14- to 19-year-old adolescents is available for the analysis of the adolescent smoking behaviour (cf. Keller, Radtke, Krebs & Hornung, 2011). For the analysis concerning the additional module “Adolescents” 1383 adolescents were questioned in four waves between January 2010 and January 2011.

So far, the additional module “Adolescents” was applied four times in four consecutive waves: in waves 3 to 6 (August 2001 to June 2002), in waves 14 to 17 (April 2004 to April 2005), in waves 26 to 29 (April 2007 to April 2008), and in waves 37 to 40 (January 2010 to January 2011).

#### **Important results of 2010:**

- The percentage of smoking 14- to 19-year-old Swiss residents has decreased from 29% in 2001/02 to 22% in 2009/10. In 2009/10 12% of the smokers are classified as daily and 10% as occasional smokers.
- The percentage of smokers is still higher for the young men than for the young women, although the percentages seem to assimilate. The smoker’s rate increases rapidly with age.
- 51% of the adolescents estimate quitting smoking to be *rather difficult* or *very difficult*.
- The percentage of daily smokers is almost three times as high, if either both parents or one of the siblings smokes.
- Smokers are more likely to have friends, who smoke as well, than non-smokers. The estimated amount of smoking peers seems to have decreased slightly since 2001/02.
- Following reasons for smoking are named most frequently: habit, coping with stress, and pleasure. The health-related reasons ‘not getting addicted’ and ‘smoking is unhealthy’ are the most commonly named reasons against smoking.
- 75% of the 14- to 19-year-old adolescents and 45% of the youngest group, the 14- to 15-year-olds, buy their tobacco products themselves.

### How many adolescents smoke?

A comparison with the data of the preceding years shows that the percentage of smokers in the 14- to 19-year-old Swiss resident population has decreased from 29% in the years 2001/02 to 22% in 2009/10 (cf. Figure 1). The decrease of the smokers' rate is most notable in the French-speaking region of Switzerland. In the other language regions the percentage of smokers remained nearly unchanged.

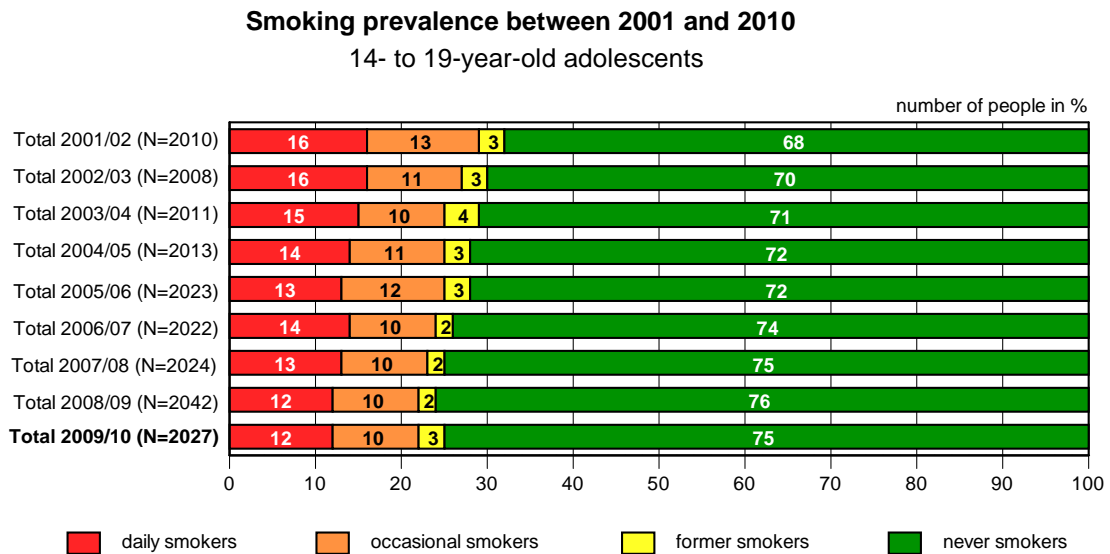


Figure 1: Smoking prevalence of the 14- to 19-year-old resident population between 2001 and 2010

The analysis according to sex shows that the amount of young smoking men is higher than the amount of young smoking women (cf. Figure 2). However, the percentages of male and female smokers seem to assimilate. Since 2001/02 a decrease in the smoker's rate of both sexes is notable.

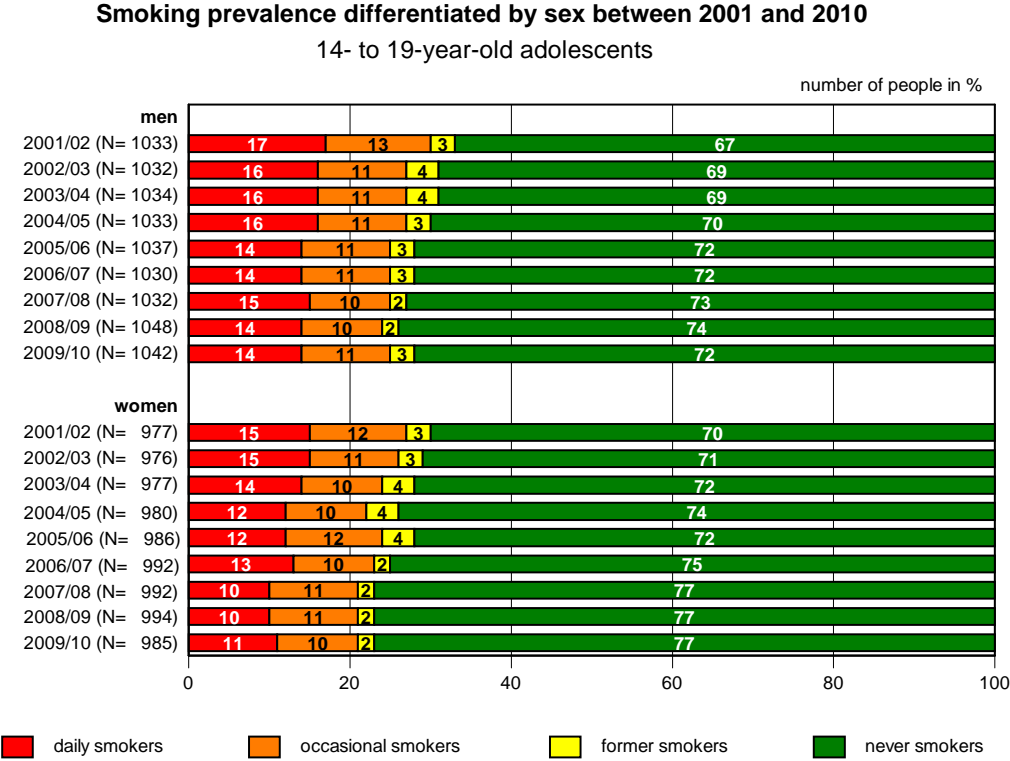


Figure 2: Smoking prevalence of the 14- to 19-year-olds between 2001 and 2010, differentiated by sex

**Smoking prevalence differentiated by age between 2001 and 2010**  
14- to 19-year-old adolescents

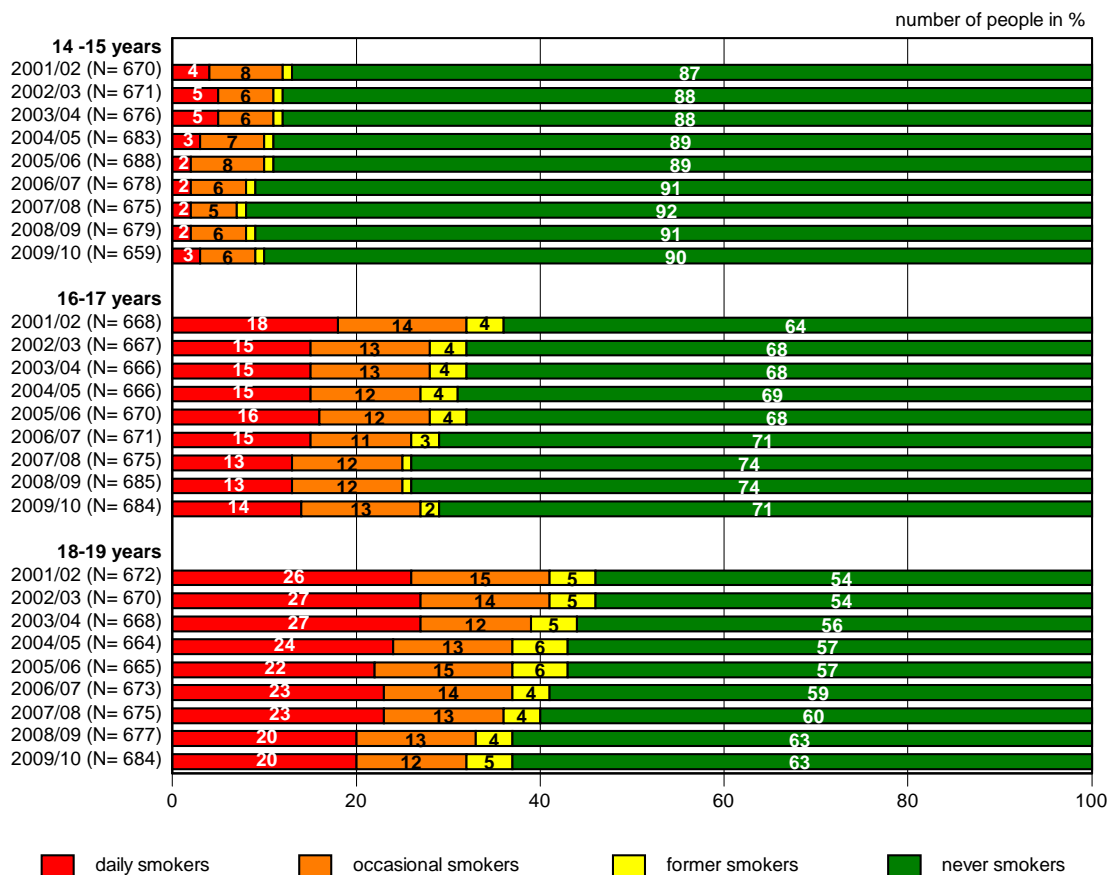


Figure 3: Smoking prevalence of the 14- to 19-year-old resident population between 2001 and 2010, differentiated by age.

The smokers' rate increases rapidly with age (cf. Figure 3). In the different age groups the percentage of smokers has developed differently: The oldest group, the 18- to 19-year-olds, has the highest smoking prevalence of the three age groups. Overall the percentage of young smokers remained nearly unchanged since the last years.

The tobacco consumption of the 16- to 19-year-olds is related to their school education. The comparison of the two groups, adolescents doing an apprenticeship and adolescents in college, reveals significant differences: In the years 2009/10 34% of the apprentices smoked, whereas 20% of the adolescents attending college smoked. This difference is solely due to the higher amount of daily smokers in the apprenticeship group; the percentage of occasional smokers is in both groups the same.

The average amount of cigarettes consumed was more or less stable in the past ten years. In 2009/10 daily smokers indicate that they smoke 11.1 cigarettes per day on average, whereas

the occasional smokers smoke 1.5 cigarettes per day. The consumption of other tobacco products plays only a minor role, since the majority of the smokers consumes cigarettes.

In the years 2009/10 29% of the adolescents indicate to have tried cannabis at least once in their life. Ten years ago in 2001/02 this rate was higher (37%). The decrease is notable in all analysed groups. Finally, 8% of the adolescents indicate to still smoke cannabis.

### ***How do the adolescents estimate their future smoking behaviour?***

The estimation of the adolescents' future smoking behaviour has not changed much since 2001/02. 45% of the smoking adolescents do not think about quitting smoking. Almost a quarter (23%) wants to quit smoking but does not plan to do so in the next half year. 17% indicate that they want to relinquish smoking in the next 1 to 6 months, and 9% want to quit smoking in the next 30 days.

51% of the adolescents estimate that quitting smoking would be rather or very difficult for them. Nevertheless, almost half (46%) of the smokers expect to have probably or definitely quit smoking in two years. However, the prevalence shows an increase of the smoking prevalence with age (cf. Figure 3), which leads to the assumption that the adolescents have inaccurate expectations concerning their smoking behaviour and the difficulty to quit smoking.

The perceived difficulty to quit smoking is amongst other factors related to the difficulty to decline a cigarette offer, whether the tobacco smoke is inhaled or not, as well as the estimated amount of smoking friends. The more friends smoke, the more difficult the quit attempt is estimated.

In this section the situation of the non-smoking adolescents is presented. Only 2% of the non-smokers expect to probably take up smoking in the next two years. None of the non-smokers indicate to definitely take up smoking in the next two years. However, 27% are doubtful whether they will be able to abstain from smoking in the future.

### ***The relationship between adolescent smoking behaviour and the smoking behaviour of their social surroundings***

The strong relationship between the own smoking behaviour and the smoking behaviour of family and friends has already been shown in the preceding years.

#### ***The connection to the smoking behaviour of the family***

The percentage of daily smoking adolescents is almost three times as high, if both parents smoke (9% with non-smoking parents, 16% with one parent smoking, and 27% with both parents smoking).

There is a strong connection to the tobacco consumption of the siblings as well: the amount of daily smoking adolescents is three times as high if one of the siblings smokes (8% with non-smoking siblings, 26% with one siblings smoking).

### *The connection to the smoking behaviour of friends*

Smokers are more likely to have friends who smoke than non-smokers. In 2009/10 79% of the daily smokers estimate that at least half of their friends smoke. For the non-smokers this estimation is only shared by 28%.

The percentage of smoking friends seems to have decreased slightly in the past 10 years: in 2001/02 26% indicated that nobody or just a few smoked, and in 2009/10 39%.

The adolescents of all age groups overestimate the percentage of smoking peers: in the years 2009/10 the prevalence of smokers is at 22%. The adolescents estimate this percentage to be as high as 49%.

### **Reasons for and against smoking**

#### *Reasons for smoking, according to current smokers*

The three main reasons named for smoking are: „smoking has become a habit“ (68% *definitely true or rather true*), “I am stressed oftentimes and smoking relaxes me” (66%), and “I enjoy the taste” (61%). Female and male smokers do not differ significantly in the reasons named for smoking.

#### *Reasons against smoking, according to non-smokers*

The main reasons named for refraining from smoking are: „Smoking is unhealthy“ (95% *definitely true or rather true*), „I do not want to become addicted“ (89%), and „Smoking is expensive“ (80%). 83% indicate to refrain from smoking because of the bad smell. Female and male non-smokers do not differ significantly in the reasons named for not smoking.

### **Smokers and non-smokers: Who has the better image?**

All the adolescents were asked whether the qualities listed in Figure 4 rather apply to smokers or non-smokers. Over the past 10 years the data has not changed significantly. Hence, only the data from 2009/10 is presented below.

Figure 4 presents a clear picture of the smokers' and non-smokers' image: generally, adolescents estimate the image of smokers more negative than the image of non-smokers. Surprising is the lack of in-group favouritism. Non-smokers as well as smokers perceive a more positive image of their non-smoking peers than of their smoking peers. Positive qualities are more often attributed to non-smokers, negative qualities more often to smokers, by both smokers and non-smokers. The smokers solely ascribe the positive qualities ‚sociable‘ and ‚more the bon-vivant‘ more often to their smoking in-group than to the non-smokers.

Notable is that a large portion of the smokers indicate no difference between smokers and non-smokers concerning the specified qualities. This percentage is highest for the oldest age group.

**The image of adolescent smokers and non-smokers**  
 2009/10, 14- to 19-year-old adolescents, N= 1 004

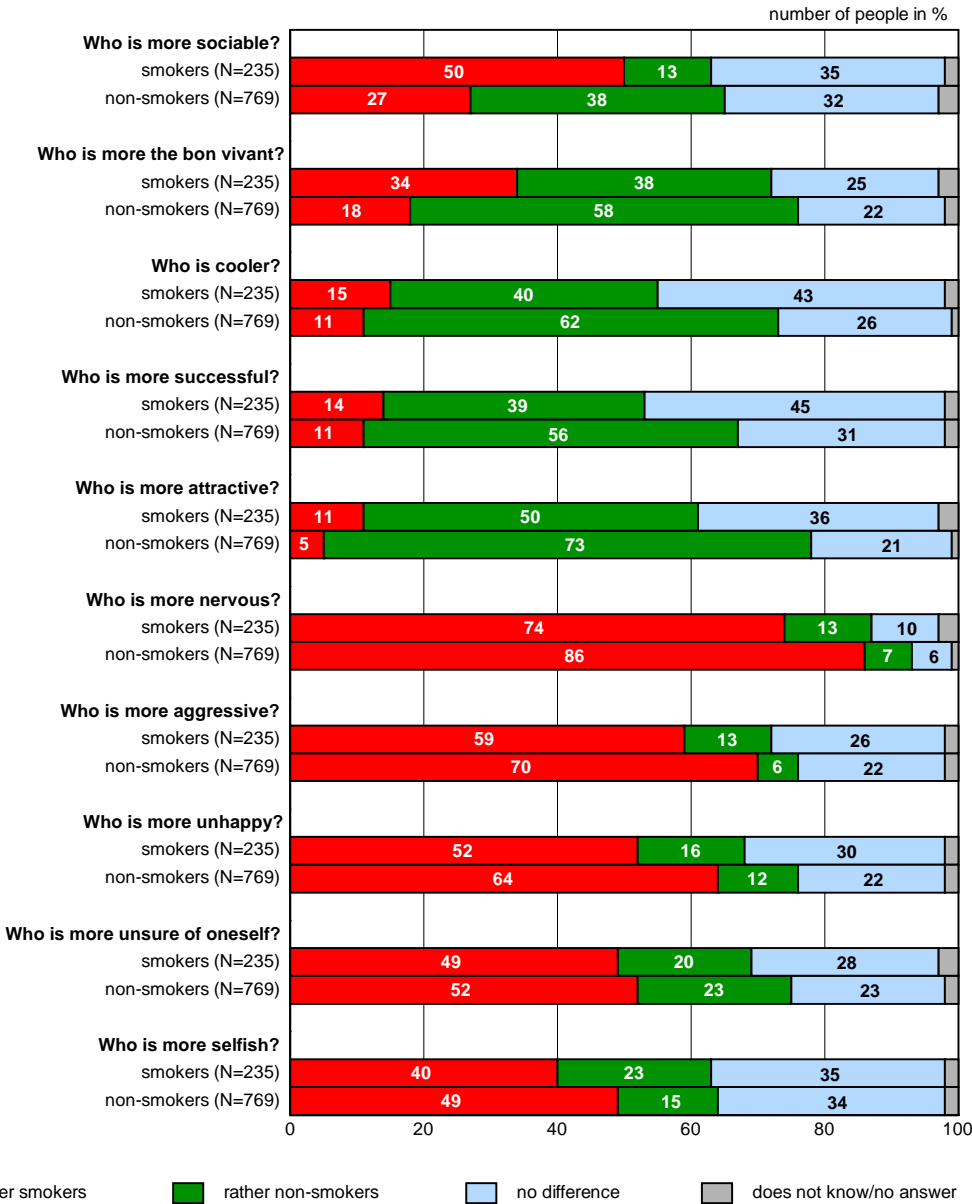


Figure 4: The image of smokers and non-smokers

**How often is the subject ,smoking' addressed at school?**

Compared to the years 2007/08 smoking is addressed a little less often at schools. The age group of the 15- to 16-year-olds indicates most often that the smoking has been discussed at

their school. Possibly the younger adolescents are more likely to remember the subject being discussed at school.

In the years 2009/10 about half (46%) of the 14- to 19-year-old adolescents indicate that smoking has been addressed several times in class. About a fifth (21%) cannot remember whether smoking has been a subject once or several times in class.

**How many adolescents buy their tobacco themselves?**

74% of the adolescents indicate to buy their tobacco themselves, 10% buy their tobacco partly themselves and 16% indicate to receive the tobacco solely from other people. There are no significant differences differentiated by language region or sex.

45% of the 14- to 15-year-olds indicate to buy their cigarettes themselves, despite existing selling restrictions for under 16-year-old adolescents. This percentage increases with age, which might be attributed to the higher amount of money at their disposal.

The adolescents, who indicated to buy their tobacco always or partly themselves, were asked where they buy their tobacco. 78% indicate the kiosk as their main source; the remaining 22% get their tobacco from cigarette machines on the streets or at the train station, in restaurants, in supermarkets, as well as in other, not otherwise specified places.

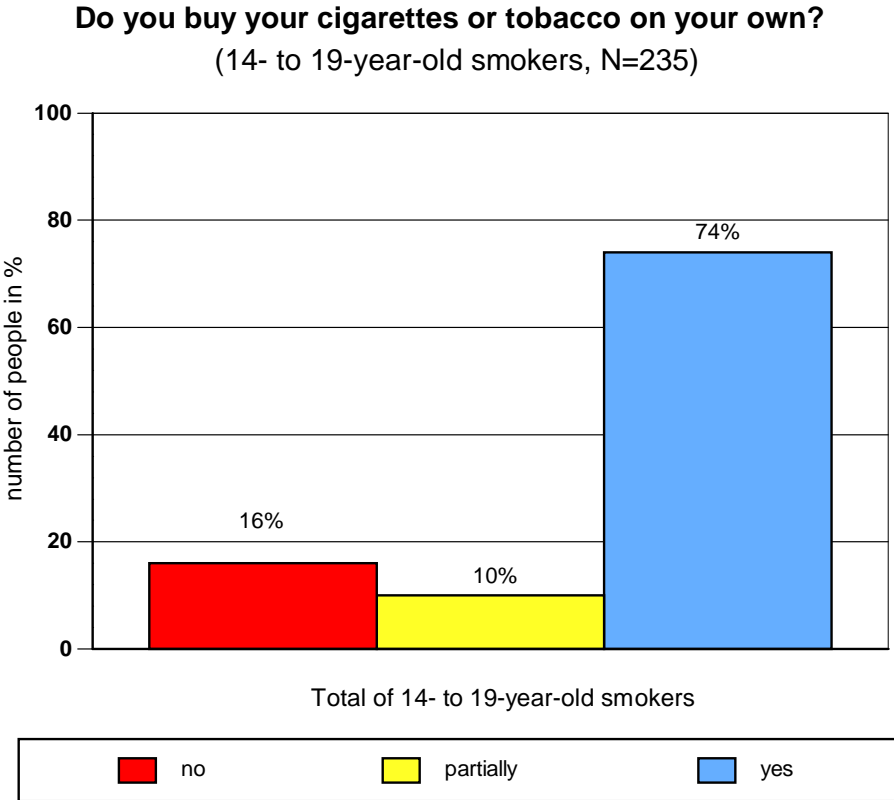


Figure 5: Adolescent smoker, who buy their cigarettes always, partly themselves and those, who receive it from other people

### ***How many adolescent have received give-away articles from cigarette-production companies?***

The percentage of adolescents, who indicate to have received give-away articles (lighters/matches, cigarettes, t-shirts etc.) from cigarette production companies has decreased in the past 10 years (from 34% to 25% in the years 2009/10).

There are no significant sex differences and due to the small sample sizes it is not possible to analyse differences in the different language regions of Switzerland. However, there are age and smoking status differences by trend. With increasing age, more give-away articles are received. Moreover, daily smokers receive give-away articles more often than occasional smokers or non-smokers. It is important to note that the smoking status is related to the age of the adolescents.

Those adolescents who indicated to have received a give-away article were asked to indicate what they had received. It is notable that from 2001/02 to 2007/08 the percentage of adolescents, who have received cigarettes as give-away articles, has decreased from 19% to 4%. In the years 2009/10 this percentage has increased slightly to 7%. The percentage of adolescents who have received lighters or matches has increased from 65% to 75%.

### ***How dangerous do the adolescent estimate smoking and other substances?***

As expected the adolescents appraise heroin, cocaine and ecstasy as most dangerous. Cannabis is estimated to be more dangerous than alcohol and tobacco. Compared to 2001/02 the tobacco consumption is estimated to be more dangerous in the years 2009/10. The percentage of adolescents indicating that a certain substance is completely harmless is – with the exception of coffee – very low.

**Estimation of the dangerousness of the following substances**  
 14- to 19-year-old adolescents, N = 1004

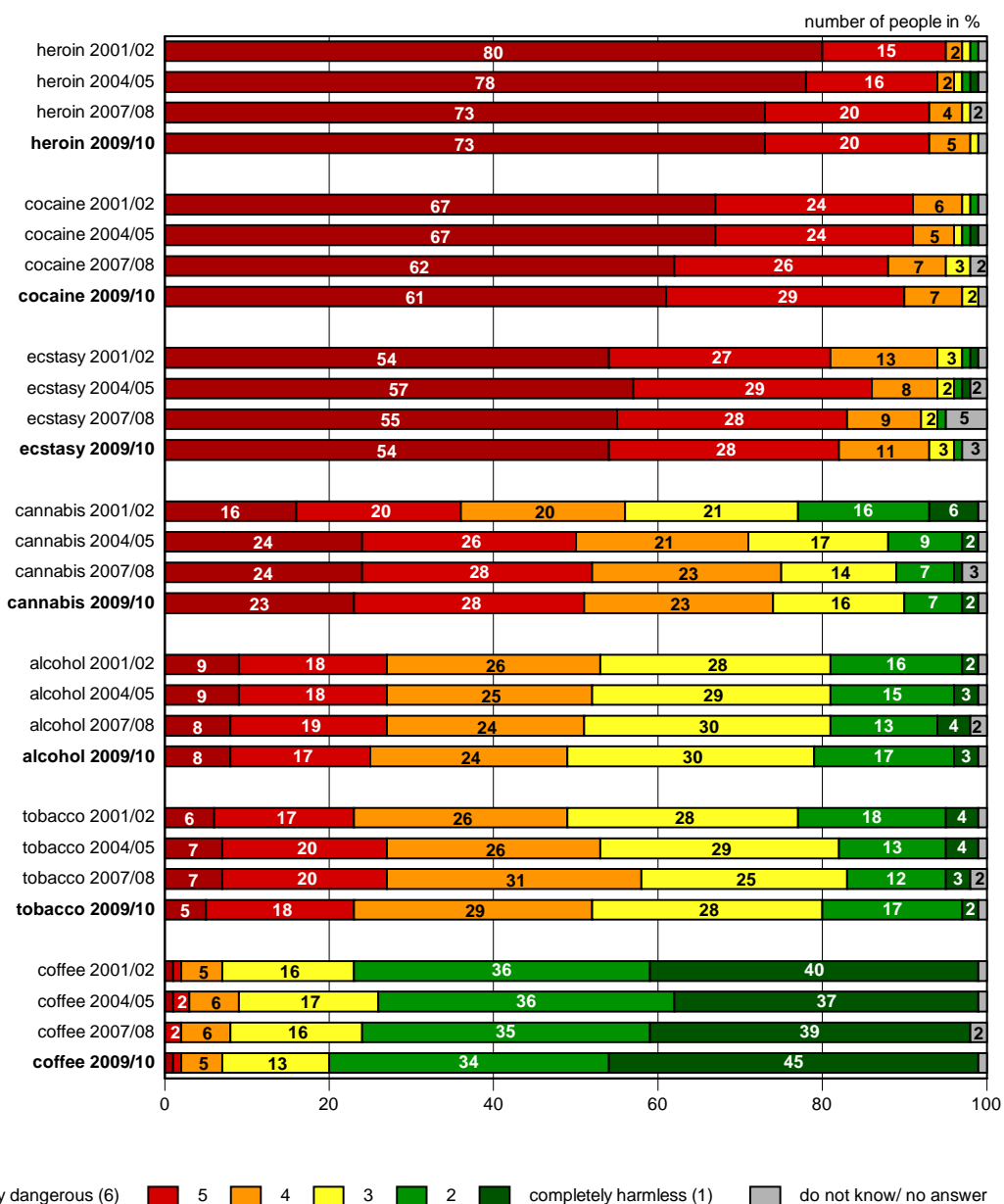


Figure 6: Estimation of the dangerousness of certain substances