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UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

LICIT AND ILLICIT DRUG USE IN AMSTERDAM II

Report of a household survey in 1994 on the prevalence of drug use among the population of 12 years and over

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Tobacco

4.1 Introduction

This is the first of a series of five chapters in which use of a particular drug is described in detail. The chapters are similar in layout. After a brief description of the prevalence figures of the drug in question, some social demographic and socio-economic aspects of use will be analysed. Use of tobacco (this chapter), alcohol (Chapter 5), cannabis (Chapter 6), difficult drugs (Chapter 7) and pharmaceutical drugs (Chapter 8) will be associated with age, gender, ethnicity, type of household, level of education, position on the labour market and level of income. The tables on which the analysis is based can be found at the end of each chapter.

This chapter will deal with tobacco use in greater detail. After a short summary of general prevalence figures in Section 4.2, the groups of smokers and non-smokers will be described in terms of social demographic characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, household characteristics) in the third section. Smoking will be related to socio-economic characteristics in the fourth section. These characteristics include level of education, position on the labour market and income.

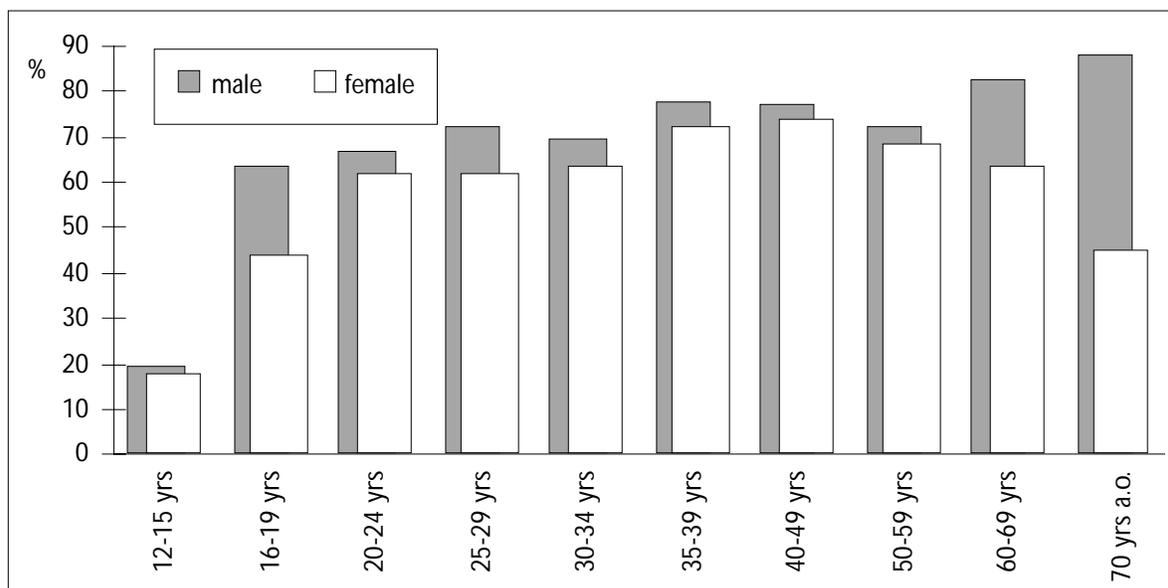
4.2 Prevalence

In Chapter 2, we found that a majority of 66.6 percent had used tobacco at least once. That does not mean that the majority of the population can be considered smokers. In the year prior to the interview, 45.2 percent of the population had used tobacco. Recent use (in the last month) is limited to 40.8 percent.

Compared to the country as a whole, the figures for Amsterdam were quite high. Trend figures from the Netherlands Health Interview Survey, conducted annually by the Central Bureau of Statistics show that in 1993, 36 percent of the Dutch population of 16 years and over smoked¹ (CBS 1994). In our Amsterdam population, this percentage was 42.2 (the age group 12-15 excluded).

Continuation rates for tobacco are high: 68 percent of all smokers continued into the year preceding the interview, and 61.4 into the preceding month.

Figure 4.1 Lifetime prevalence of tobacco use by age group and gender



Most smokers can be regarded as experienced users: 85 percent smoked on more than 25 occasions.

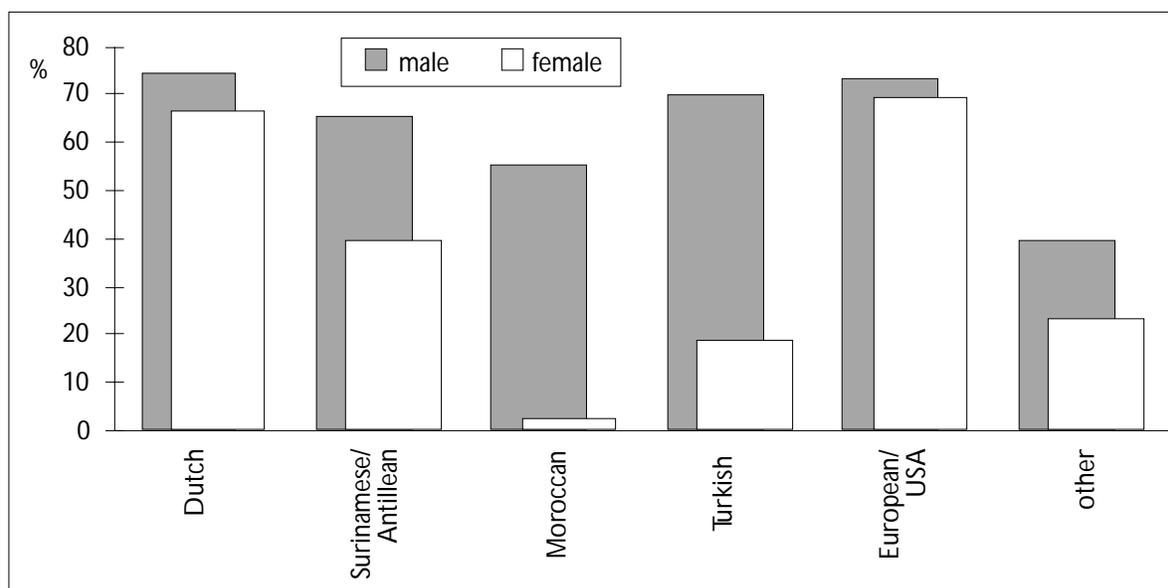
4.3 Social-demographic aspects of tobacco use

Figure 4.1 shows the lifetime prevalence of tobacco use by age and gender. The graph clearly shows that the habit of smoking is generally picked up between the ages of 16 and 24. On average, men start smoking at the age of 16.7. Women start almost a year later at the age of 17.5. With one exception, smoking is more prevalent among men than among women. The exception is recent smoking of young girls (12-15 years), where prevalence is actually higher than it is for boys. In the age groups between 35 and 50, the level of smoking among women approaches that of men.

Differences between the sexes are greater among the elderly. In the two highest age groups, men have a higher and women a lower score on lifetime prevalence of tobacco. This difference between the sexes is probably due to the lower degree of acceptance of smoking by women that came to an end after the second World War. Acceptance of women smoking seems to have gone further in Amsterdam than in the country as a whole. Nationally, 31 percent of all women over 16 smoke as compared to 37 percent in Amsterdam. For men, these figures are 42.1 and 43.9 percent respectively. Smoking behaviour varies between and within ethnic groups. Levels are highest for the Dutch and citizens of other European countries and the USA.

Smoking is much less common among people from Surinamese, Antillean and Turkish origin. Even lower levels are measured for Moroccans and citizens from

Figure 4.2 Lifetime prevalence of tobacco use by ethnicity and gender



'other' countries. Smoking behaviour does not differ much between the sexes among Dutch nationals or immigrants from European countries or the USA. Moderate to big differences between the sexes were measured in the immigrant communities from developing countries. Moroccan, and to a lesser extent, Turkish women rarely use tobacco in any form.

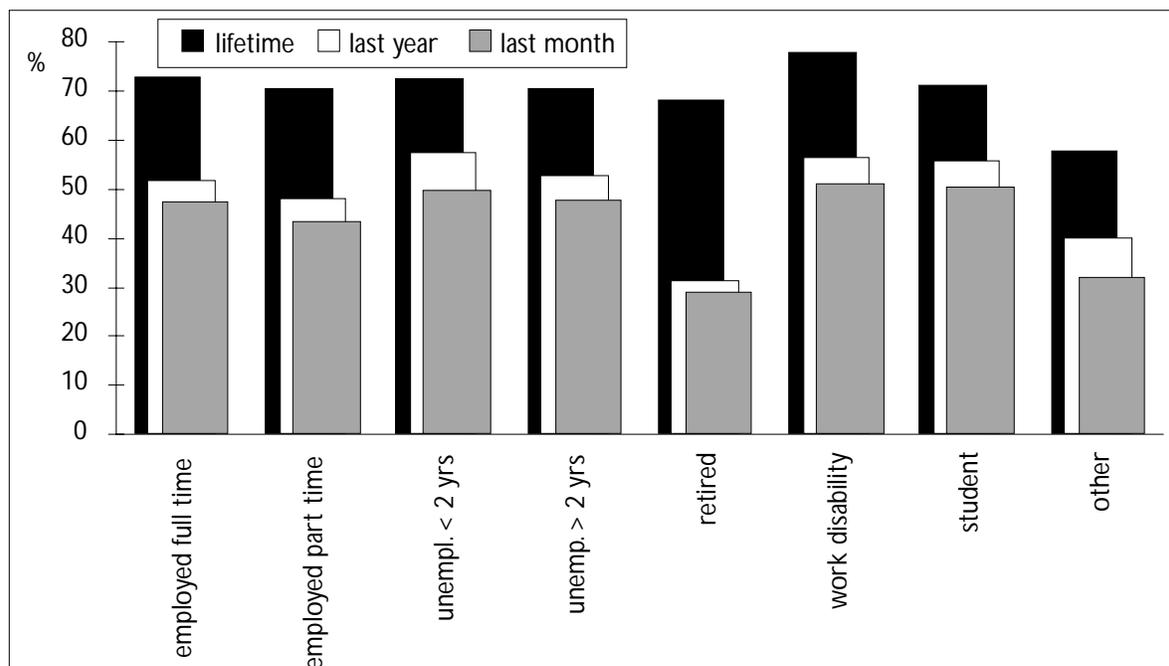
There are no notable differences between household categories where smoking behaviour is concerned. Lifetime prevalence is on the same level for most categories. The only demographic subgroup with a lifetime prevalence well below average are the respondents that still live at home with their parents ('living in'). Of course, this is more likely to be a matter of age than of household characteristics. Recent use shows more variations between the households. Households with two adults have lower prevalence figures than households with one adult present. It is not very plausible that household characteristics alone are responsible for this difference. It is more likely that a lifestyle component is at work here, in which choices in the area of the family are reflected.

4.4 The socio-economic aspects of tobacco use

Educational background does not have much impact on smoking behaviour. The only categories with a lower level of prevalence are lower elementary school and the category 'other'. This can be attributed to the predominance of elder women (especially of non-Dutch origin) in these categories, a group for which relatively low prevalence was found in the previous section. Position on the labour market is mainly relevant for recent use.

Lifetime prevalence is roughly the same for all groups, but last year and last month prevalence are well below average for retired persons, and above average for

Figure 4.3 Tobacco use by position on the labour market



people with a full-time job, the unemployed (both long and short term), people receiving disability benefits and students. Income levels could not be related to tobacco use, except in the category of 750 guilders a month and less, a group consisting mainly of very young respondents, which means low levels of prevalence.

4.5 Summary

Tobacco use is widespread in a large part of society: 66.6 percent scored on lifetime prevalence and 40.8 percent still smoked in the month prior to the interview. Groups with a relatively low level of prevalence included: young men (under the age of 15), young and old women (under 19 and over 60) and women of ethnic minorities, especially those of Turkish and Moroccan origin. Single adults (with or without children) had somewhat higher levels of (recent) prevalence.

Differences based on socio-economic characteristics were less distinct. Generally, these differences were merely a reflection of social characteristics such as age or gender. For instance, the lower prevalence of smoking among people with only primary school education is primarily attributable to the fact that this group is dominated by elder women.

1 The definition of smoking is an affirmative answer to the question "Do you smoke?" Affirmative answers include: "yes, daily" and "yes, occasionally". These figures were compared to last month prevalence in the 1994 survey.

4.6 Tables regarding the use of tobacco

Table 4.1 Use of tobacco by age group and gender

age group	lifetime			last year			last month			N		
	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total
12-15 yrs	20.0	18.4	19.3	13.3	14.9	14.1	3.8	4.6	9.4	105	87	192
16-19 yrs	63.9	44.4	53.3	54.2	32.3	42.3	50.6	35.4	39.0	83	99	182
20-24 yrs	67.1	62.2	64.2	60.0	51.1	54.7	63.2	52.0	46.8	155	225	380
25-29 yrs	72.6	61.9	67.1	60.0	47.2	53.4	57.5	43.1	48.5	285	299	584
30-34 yrs	69.6	63.6	66.6	50.0	44.6	47.3	56.3	40.5	42.5	270	269	539
35-39 yrs	77.6	72.4	74.9	59.8	52.3	55.8	50.2	47.3	50.4	219	243	462
40-49 yrs	77.2	74.2	75.6	53.5	52.2	52.8	44.6	44.1	48.6	359	372	731
50-59 yrs	72.6	68.7	70.5	46.3	37.8	41.8	60.0	47.0	38.8	190	217	407
60-69 yrs	82.7	63.7	72.8	39.5	33.8	36.5	47.0	30.8	34.5	185	201	386
70 yrs a.o.	88.1	45.1	60.3	36.7	20.7	26.3	43.5	16.4	24.0	177	324	501
total	72.3	61.3	66.4	49.7	41.1	45.1	45.0	37.0	40.7	2 028	2 336	4 364
sign. T-test:	p<.05	n.s.	p<.05	p<.05	p<.05	p<.05	n.s.	p<.05	p<.05			

Table 4.2 Use of tobacco by ethnicity and gender

ethnicity	lifetime			last year			last month			N		
	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total
Dutch	75.0	67.0	70.6	50.8	44.9	47.6	46.4	40.3	43.1	1 617	1 926	3 543
Sur./Ant.	66.0	40.1	51.0	45.6	27.2	35.0	41.5	25.2	32.1	147	202	349
Moroccan	55.8	3.0	32.9	57.4	1.5	27.0	38.4	1.5	22.4	86	66	152
Turkish	70.4	18.8	46.1	57.4	16.7	38.2	51.9	16.7	35.3	54	48	102
Europ./USA	73.7	69.8	71.8	43.9	43.4	43.6	38.6	37.7	38.2	57	53	110
Other	40.0	23.3	33.8	34.0	20.0	28.8	28.0	20.0	25.0	50	30	80
Total	72.3	61.3	66.4	49.7	41.1	45.1	45.0	37.0	40.7	2 011	2 325	4 336
sign. Chi-sq.	p<.05	p<.05	p<.05	n.s.	p<.05	p<.05	p<.05	p<.05	p<.05			

Table 4.3 Use of tobacco by type of household

type of household	lifetime		last year		last month		N
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	
single	962	71.0	701	51.7	638	47.1	1 355
single parent	168	67.7	119	48.0	113	45.6	248
couple	680	71.1	378	39.5	340	35.5	957
couple with children	577	67.0	394	45.8	356	41.3	861
living at home	205	42.3	155	32.0	136	28.0	485
other	306	66.8	219	47.8	195	42.6	458
total	2 898	66.4	1 966	45.1	1 778	40.7	4 364
signif. Chi-square		p<.05		p<.05		p<.05	

Table 4.4 Use of tobacco by level of education

level of education		lifetime		last year		last month		N
		abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	
elementary	LO	355	58.3	241	39.6	222	36.5	609
vocational (low)	LBO	425	75.1	269	47.5	248	43.8	566
secondary (low)	MAVO	405	67.3	275	45.7	254	42.2	602
vocational (middle)	MBO	297	72.1	199	48.3	179	43.4	412
second. (middle/high)	HAVO/VWO	464	70.1	343	51.8	312	47.1	662
voc. (high)/University	HBO/WO	842	71.3	563	47.7	499	42.3	1 181
other		110	33.1	76	22.9	64	19.3	332
total		2 898	66.4	1 966	45.1	1 778	40.7	4 364
signif. Chi-square		p<.05		p<.05		p<.05		

Table 4.5 Use of tobacco by position on the labour market

position at labour market	lifetime		last year		last month		N	
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%		
employed full time	995	73.0	710	52.1	649	47.6	1 363	
employed part time	389	70.6	265	48.1	240	43.6	551	
unemployed < 2 years	115	72.8	91	57.6	79	50.0	158	
unemployed > 2 years	80	70.8	60	53.1	54	47.8	113	
retired	376	68.5	173	31.5	160	29.1	549	
work disability	157	78.1	114	56.7	103	51.2	201	
student	134	71.3	105	55.9	95	50.5	188	
other	652	51.7	448	36.1	398	32.1	1 241	
total		2 898	66.4	1 966	45.1	1 778	40.7	4 364
significance		p<.05		p<.05		p<.05		

Table 4.6 Use of tobacco by household income

income (Dutch guilders)	lifetime		last year		last month		N	
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%		
< 750	49	53.8	40	47.6	35	41.7	84	
750-1250	214	69.7	161	52.4	145	47.2	307	
1250-1500	187	67.0	135	48.4	125	44.8	279	
1500-2000	360	65.7	246	44.9	227	41.4	548	
2000-2500	325	71.3	226	49.6	208	45.6	456	
2500-3000	281	69.4	181	44.7	157	38.8	405	
3000-4000	345	71.9	234	48.8	210	43.8	480	
4000-5000	275	71.6	169	44.0	155	40.4	384	
>5000	320	72.1	199	44.8	178	40.1	444	
unknown	542	55.5	375	38.4	338	34.6	977	
total		2 898	66.4	1 966	45.1	1 778	40.7	4 364
significance		p<.05		p<.05		p<.05		