



CANCER BAROMETER 2021 SUMMARY

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS AMONG FRENCH PEOPLE
IN RELATION TO CANCER

IN
PARTNERSHIP
WITH



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CANCER AND RISK FACTORS

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INFORMATION ON CANCER AND ITS RISK FACTORS

Perceptions and sources of information: trends

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TOBACCO AND CANCER

Perception of risks in 2021 and trends since 2015

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Behaviours, opinions and perceptions of risks

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Awareness, opinions and habits

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INTRO

Why a Cancer Barometer?

According to 2018 data, 3.8 million people in Mainland France are living with or have had cancer, and an estimated 382,000 new cancers are diagnosed in adults: this number is constantly growing. Cancers affect men more (54%), with prostate, lung, and colorectal cancers having the highest incidence in this cohort. In women, breast, colorectal, and lung cancers continue to be the most common forms. Thanks to progress in medicine and prevention, the standardised mortality rate decreased between 2010 and 2018 (-2% for men, and 0.7% for women). Nevertheless, since the 2000s, cancers remain the leading cause of overall and premature mortality.

Social inequalities, which are more pronounced among men, are observed in relation to mortality. To address this major public health challenge, France has adopted successive cancer control plans. In addition, in 2021, France adopted a Ten-Year Strategy for the first time. This strategy includes four priorities; one of these focuses on prevention, and another focuses on combatting inequalities. At a time when at least 40% of cancers are preventable, the human and social sciences are enlisted to help prevent and combat inequalities. The Cancer Barometer is part of this vision.

Aims?

The Cancer Barometer is based on the analysis of a telephone survey conducted on a random sample, the only tool available in France to gain an understanding of the population's beliefs, perceptions, awareness, opinions, and behaviours in relation to cancers, their risk factors, screening, and prevention

methods. Studying these factors is key, given that behaviours are governed by all of these factors. The Cancer Barometers are designed to be repeated at regular intervals over time (every five years), using the same method and similar questions to obtain a regular "snapshot" of French people's perceptions and behaviours in relation to cancers at a given time, and also to analyse trends in the main behaviours and perceptions in respect of the disease, risk factors, and documenting the topic of inequalities. The fourth round of this survey, conducted in 2021, after those of 2005, 2010 and 2015, is presented here. For this edition, field data collection was moved back one year to account for the impact of the health crisis. The Cancer Barometer is used as a steering tool for prevention policies, and is also useful for devising differentiated prevention practices for specific cohorts. In fact, the findings of all the Cancer Barometers can be utilised by stakeholders in the field for trials, or evaluations in the context of operations aimed at specific cohorts (improving screening uptake, incentive to change a particular behaviour, etc.). It also opens up new research prospects, through the free availability of the database, and the emergence of new topics.

New features?

This new Cancer Barometer, linking behaviours and perceptions among the French population in relation to cancer from 2005 to 2021, is made up of eight sections. Tailored to the present-day context, it incorporates changes in prevention guidelines and accounts for variation in health behaviours. Based on an updated questionnaire compared to previous versions, it is also aimed at increasing the quality

of the data collected, with a reduced number of items and the withdrawal of the topic on the perception of care.

The first section focuses on the perception of cancers and cancer risk factors. It helps gain an understanding of perceptions of cancer along with any relevant trends, through open or multiple-choice questions selected in the scientific literature; the number of questions has been reduced compared to 2015. Following on from the findings of the previous Cancer Barometer, additional investigations have been conducted with a view to understanding the choices of people providing somewhat unexpected responses. Moreover, the perception of risk factors has been analysed using a two-pronged approach: firstly, for the first time in France, through an open question to compile spontaneously perceived risk factors, and, secondly, as for the previous editions, by providing a list including proven and unproven risk factors. The second section focuses on impressions of information on cancer and its risk factors, the sources of information used by respondents and on trends in respect of these elements. One new feature relates to the study of the impressions of "information overload" in relation to cancer. Behaviours and perceptions in relation to tobacco are analysed in the third section. In this edition, some questions have been amended to refocus the survey on the topic of cancer, while a question on the strategies needed to combat tobacco consumption has been introduced. The study of perceptions and behaviours in relation to alcohol is presented in the fourth section: as for tobacco, some items have been amended to focus on

the perceived link between alcohol and cancer, and a question on strategies to reduce consumption has been added. The fifth section relates to behaviours and opinions in relation to UV exposure from sunlight and sunbeds. This topic has been extensively reworked with respect to the 2015 edition. In particular, the questionnaire has been supplemented with questions on awareness of the UV index, tanning, and on perceptions of sun exposure times for vitamin D levels. In addition, the collection of opinions on sunbed use regulations is a new feature in this section. The sixth section relates to nutrition. Besides certain perceptions investigated since 2010, new food groups (wholegrains, nutritional supplements, ultra-processed foods, organic foods, and pulses) have been taken into consideration. In addition, opinions on fasting and nutritional supplement use have been surveyed for the first time. The new topic in this Cancer Barometer, e-cigarettes, is presented in the seventh section. As well as habits and their reasons, this research is the first of its kind in France to provide detailed data on perceptions of harm caused by e-cigarettes and their constituents. Finally, the final section circles back to the 2010 Cancer Barometer, analysing behaviours and perceptions in relation to breast cancer, cervical cancer, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer and lung cancer screening, and HPV vaccination. For this Cancer Barometer, new questions have been proposed around lung cancer screening, linked with the pilot programme to be launched by the French National Cancer Institute, in order to outline a potential organised screening programme.

1 CANCER AND RISK FACTORS

Opinions and perceptions of the French population

SOME CANCERS ARE PREVENTABLE: THE ROLE OF PERCEPTIONS

In France, 40% of cancers could be prevented by developing positive environments and behaviours. Such behaviours may be guided by the beliefs and perceptions of those affected, which we need to understand. The aim of this section is to present the variety of representations of cancer and perceptions of cancer risk factors among a representative sample of the French population in 2021. This section is also designed to show how these perceptions have evolved over the years.

CANCER: PERCEIVED AS LESS SERIOUS AND TRENDS IN BELIEFS

Cancer is perceived as a serious disease, but one that can be actively prevented, and which it is possible to live with for a number of years. However, its repercussions in 2021 seem to be just as significant as 15 years ago. Two-thirds of respondents believe that they are at risk of cancer, a perception that has decreased since 2015. It is also noted that the perception of cancers as being contagious has decreased, but their impacts on a person's career are now perceived as being greater than they were ten years ago.

QUITE CLEAR PERCEPTION OF CERTAIN CANCER RISK FACTORS

For risk factors promoting cancer onset, the innovative approach proposed here demonstrated that French people have quite a clear idea of the significance of certain risk factors, such as tobacco, diet, and alcohol, which are mentioned spontaneously. Compared to 2005, the perception of tobacco is very stable, whereas that of unproven psychological factors (e.g. stress, emotional shock, anxiety) is increasing.

UNDERESTIMATED CANCER RISK FACTORS

The significance of other scientifically proven risk factors is underestimated; in particular lack of exercise, unprotected sun exposure, overweight or obesity are spontaneously mentioned by under 3% of those surveyed. It also seems that over two-thirds of respondents do not perceive factors such as breastfeeding as protective factors against breast cancer.

GREATER PERCEPTION OF CERTAIN RISK FACTORS, WHETHER THEY ARE PROVEN OR UNPROVEN

In 2021, compared to previous years, there is a greater perception of emotional factors as risk factors, along with environmental exposures and alcohol consumption or hormonal contraception. In addition, there is a greater perception of the work environment as a setting involving potential exposure to harmful substances promoting cancer onset.

67.7%

of French people believe that they are at risk of getting cancer someday, versus **70.8 %** in 2015

42%

of French people consider themselves to have been exposed to harmful substances promoting cancer onset during their career, versus **39.1%** in 2015

Between 2015 and 2021, the proportion of French people who believe that cancer is often hereditary has increased, up from **61.0%** to

67.7%

More and more French people view alcohol consumption as a cancer risk factor: **78.4%** in 2015 versus

91.9%

69.2%

of French people continue to dismiss the idea that nothing can be done to prevent cancer

96%

of French people agree that it is possible to live with cancer for a number of years

2 INFORMATION ON CANCER AND ITS RISK FACTORS

Perceptions and sources of information: trends?

INFORMATION AS A MEANS TO COMBAT PREVENTABLE CANCERS

A significant proportion of preventable cancers are linked with environmental factors: information on cancer risk factors and protective behaviours is a key component of prevention. The aim of this section is to analyse opinions of information on cancer and its risk factors, sources of information on the disease, as well as perceptions of the reliability of such information.

HIGH OPINION OF INFORMATION ON CANCER RISKS DESPITE AN ABUNDANCE OF INFORMATION

In 2021, the majority of respondents stated that they had a good level of information on cancer risks (67.7%). For all that, a large proportion of the population shares the view that there is so much advice on cancer that it is hard to know which to follow (56.1%); also, there is so much information available that it starts to get repetitive (39.8%).

UNSATISFACTORY OPINION OF INFORMATION FOR MAJOR CANCER RISK FACTORS

French people state that they have a good level of information for three risk factors: tobacco (92.7%), alcohol (76.4%), and sun exposure (80.5%). Conversely, a poorer level of information is observed for risk factors responsible for a non-negligible number of cancers, on which action can be taken. In total, 75.1% of people consider themselves ill-informed about cancer risks associated with certain infections, 50.4% for those associated with sunbeds, 45.9% for risks associated with a lack of exercise, 44.0% for diet-related risks, and 41.7% for those associated with overweight and with obesity.

GREATER OPINION OF INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS

In 2021, more respondents considered themselves well-informed about environmental cancer factors, such as pesticides (+ 19.5 points over the 2010-

2021 period), air pollution (+ 14 points since 2015) and occupational exposures (+ 8 points since 2015). However, despite an increase, only half of those surveyed stated that they felt they were well-informed about these causes of cancer, and fewer than one-third in relation to electromagnetic wave-related risks (70.1% stating that they were ill-informed).

VARIETY OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON CANCER

The primary sources of information for French people on cancer are TV (55.9%), the Internet and social media (36.6%), and the written press (32.1%). Only 20.2% mention healthcare professionals, and 14.5% prevention campaigns. For all that, respondents describe healthcare professionals as the most reliable source. These findings suggest a need to rethink the connection between this information source, viewed as reliable, and information channels that are seeing increasing levels of use, such as the Internet and social media.

67.7%

of those aged from **15 to 85 years** surveyed in 2021 state that they consider themselves well-informed about cancer risks

Compared to 2010, those surveyed considered themselves better informed about pesticides

53.4%

(+ 19.5 points) as a cancer risk factor

Compared to 2015, respondents consider themselves better informed about air pollution

51.8%

(+ 14 points) and less well-informed about electromagnetic waves **29.3%** (- 4.3 points) as cancer risk factors

56.1%

of respondents feel that it is hard to follow advice on cancer given its abundance

The primary sources of information on cancer for those aged **15-85 years** are:

TV

55.9%

written press

32.1%

social media

36.6%

friends and family

26%

3 TOBACCO AND CANCER

Perception of risks in 2021 and trends since 2015

TOBACCO USE – THE LEADING CANCER RISK FACTOR

Tobacco use is the leading cancer risk factor. In 2015, it was responsible for 68,000 new cancer cases, and 46,000 cancer-related deaths. The ten-year anti-cancer strategy decreed by the French President in February 2021 calls for everyone to get involved in kicking society's tobacco habit, while the prevalence of tobacco use in France, after a previous decrease, has stabilised with a quarter of the population smoking on a daily basis. How were the cancer risks associated with tobacco use perceived in France in 2021?

GOOD OVERALL PERCEPTION OF RISKS, BUT MINIMISING OF THE HARMFULNESS OF PERSONAL CONSUMPTION

In 2021, more than 8 out of 10 people stated that smoking tobacco definitely caused cancer onset, which is an increase compared to 2015. Similarly, the perceived threshold of harmfulness in terms of the number of cigarettes smoked has fallen compared to 2015, from 12.6 to 9.2 cigarettes per day on average. This threshold, despite this positive trend, is still very high, as is the perceived threshold of harmfulness in terms of the number of years of tobacco use (13.4 years on average). In 2021, almost 6 out of 10 people surveyed thought that the number of cigarettes consumed per day was more harmful than the length of the period

of tobacco use, even though prolonged exposure to carcinogenic substances over time is considerably more toxic. More than 7 out of 10 daily smokers are worried about getting tobacco-related cancer someday; this proportion is stable compared to 2015. However, some distancing from risks is observed among smokers, who minimise the harmfulness of personal habits. More than 1 out of every 2 smokers sets at least one of the perceived thresholds of harmfulness, in terms of the number of years of tobacco use or the number of cigarettes smoked per day, above their personal consumption. The cohort also agrees with some misconceptions, such as, for example, one out of every two people believing that "Exercise helps purify the lungs of tobacco".

STRIKING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN TERMS OF RISK PERCEPTION

Although they are less striking in 2021, the socioeconomic differences observed in 2015 are still present. Individuals with lower qualification levels are less likely to perceive the cancer risk associated with tobacco. Individuals with lower incomes are more likely to report higher perceived thresholds of harmfulness. Individuals with

lower incomes and lower qualification levels are more likely to feel ill-informed about the cancer risks associated with tobacco. These inequalities in terms of cancer risk perception chime with the inequalities observed in terms of the prevalence of tobacco use in France.

LACK OF ENGAGEMENT OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

In 2021, for over three-quarters of smokers, the topic of tobacco had not been discussed with a healthcare professional in the previous 12 months, even though advice from a healthcare professional to quit tobacco increases tobacco cessation rates at six months by around 70%. Despite the potential impact of the COVID-related health crisis, particularly due to a decrease in consultations during lockdown periods, substantial work still needs to be done to raise awareness among healthcare professionals of the importance of detecting, focusing on, or managing tobacco use, a major health determinant, and to promote the effectiveness of their support for smokers.

80.3%

of those aged 15-85 years believe that smoking tobacco can definitely promote cancer onset

Smokers believe that there is a cancer risk associated with tobacco from

9.2

cigarettes per day and 13.4 years of tobacco use on average

21.2%

representing one out of every five smokers, are of the view that there is only a cancer risk associated with tobacco above 20 cigarettes smoked per day

52.6%

of daily smokers place at least one threshold (number of cigarettes or number of years) above their personal consumption

54.8%

representing over half of those surveyed, believe that "exercise helps purify the lungs of tobacco"

22.5%

of smokers have discussed the topic of tobacco with a healthcare professional in the last 12 months

4 ALCOHOL AND CANCER

Behaviours, opinions and perceptions of risks

ALCOHOL AS A CAUSE OF CANCER

The harm caused by alcohol has clearly been demonstrated, and its carcinogenic nature has been recognised for over 35 years. In France, it is one of the leading causes of mortality with an estimated 41,000 deaths in 2015, of which 16,000 were cancer-related, and 28,000 new cancer cases, which ranks it second as a preventable cancer risk factor after tobacco. While alcohol consumption has stabilised in recent years, it remains high in France, and is still a major public health challenge.

ANALYSING PERCEPTIONS AROUND ALCOHOL TO GUIDE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The 2021 Cancer Barometer was aimed at establishing a picture of perceptions in French around cancer and particularly around alcohol-related cancer risk, with a view to gaining an understanding of habits, and taking potential action on behaviours, and also guide public health strategies. 4,938 people aged 15 to 85 years were surveyed on the topic of alcohol. The findings were analysed for 2021 and then compared to the 2005-2021 period for common questions.

REPORTED ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION FREQUENCY: STABILITY AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

The findings show that 80.3% of those surveyed reported having drunk alcohol at least once in the last year, 44.4% had consumed it every month, 47.4% every week, and 8.0% every day. Since 2005, annual and daily consumptions have decreased, and have subsequently stabilised since 2015, with almost identical proportions in 2015 and 2021. Men are more likely to report drinking alcohol every day than women (10.1% vs 3.0%). Daily consumption differs substantially based on age: those over 75 years are three times more likely to report consuming alcohol every day than those aged 45-54 years.

UNDERESTIMATION OF THE LINK BETWEEN CANCER AND ALCOHOL

The respondents underestimate the link between alcohol and cancer: alcohol is spontaneously mentioned as a cause of cancer by one-third of those surveyed, behind tobacco and diet. In addition, when surveyed on the perceived harm caused by alcohol compared to other risks,

8 out of 10 respondents believe that road accidents and violence are the primary risks associated with alcohol consumption. This opinion is more likely to be shared by people over 65 years of age, those with a low level of education, and those whose monthly income is below €1,100.

ALCOHOL: RARELY BROACHED WITH HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

For the first time, Cancer Barometer respondents were surveyed on alcohol as a discussion topic with a healthcare professional. The findings show that alcohol is still rarely discussed, with only 5.4% of those surveyed reporting having broached the topic with a healthcare professional.

PUBLIC POLICIES AIMED AT REDUCING ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

The participants were surveyed for the first time on the measures that they considered to be most effective in reducing alcohol consumption in France. Among the measures proposed, "enforcing the ban on alcohol sales to minors" is mentioned most often (6 out of every 10 respondents).

8%

of those aged 15-85 years report drinking alcohol every day in 2021, versus 14.5% in 2005

23.5%

of those aged 15-85 years believe that, generally, drinking a little wine lowers cancer risk, rather than drinking none

5.4%

of those aged 15-85 years report having discussed the topic of alcohol with a healthcare professional in the last 12 months

14.6%

of those aged 15-85 years believe that raising the price of alcohol is an effective measure for reducing alcohol consumption in France

Alcohol is spontaneously mentioned for those aged 15-85 years as the

No. 3 cause

of cancer, behind tobacco and diet

5 CANCERS AND UV EXPOSURE FROM SUNLIGHT OR SUNBEDS

Awareness, beliefs and habits

A NEED TO DOCUMENT AWARENESS, BELIEFS, AND HABITS

The most preventable risk factor in respect of skin cancers is excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunlight and sunbeds. UV exposure in the population is poorly documented. The objective of this study was to describe French people's awareness and level of information around UV-related risks in 2021, and compare the findings to previous years.

SUN EXPOSURE, AN IDENTIFIED RISK, BUT INFORMATION CONSOLIDATION IS NEEDED

In 2021, over 9 out of every 10 people (95.7%) stated that sun exposure represents a cancer risk, and 8 out of every 10 people (80.3%) considered themselves very well-informed or quite well-informed about this risk. It is observed that one-quarter (25.7%) of those surveyed said that they knew how much time per day is needed to get enough vitamin D; under half (48.3%) of those aged 15-75 years are concerned about mole changes based on ABCDE assessment criteria; over two-thirds

(64.5%) of those under 50 report having suntanned in 2020. While under one out of every 10 men (8.9%) agrees, mistakenly, that "applying sunscreen once allows you to expose yourself to the sun all day", two times fewer (4.1%) women share this belief. This opinion has seen a sharp decline since 2010.

SUNBEDS: DECLINE IN RECENT USE, BUT LIFETIME EXPOSURE REMAINS STABLE, WITH GENERALLY POOR AWARENESS OF RISKS

Even though UV exposure from sunbeds is just as carcinogenic as from sunlight, one out of every 4 people (20.9%) is of the view that UV exposure from sunbeds is less harmful than sunlight. In addition, 89.5% state that sunbed use causes cancer, and 47.9% consider themselves very well-informed or quite well-informed

about the carcinogenic risks associated with sunbed use. In terms of use, 15.2% of those surveyed report having had sunbed sessions in their lifetime: this figure has been stable since 2010. Only 1.0% report having used a sunbed in the last 12 months, showing a significant decrease since 2010 (3.5%). Almost one-quarter (23.9%) agree, mistakenly, that "using a sunbed before you go on holiday prepares your skin to protect it against the sun".

NEED TO STEP UP UV PREVENTION

Current awareness communication and prevention initiatives have not resulted in a stabilisation or reduction in the incidence of skin melanoma, which continues to rise. The findings observed provide an incentive for a significant stepping-up of sun-related prevention initiatives in France.

80.3%

of respondents consider themselves very well-informed or quite well-informed about cancer risks linked with sun exposure, **under half, 47.9%** feel this way about sunbed exposure

6.5%

of those **aged 15-75 years** who have never had cancer agree with the belief that "applying sunscreen once allows you to expose yourself to the sun all day", versus **9.4% in 2015** (significant decrease) among men and women

64.5%

Representing over two-thirds of those **under 50 years** report having suntanned in 2020

Showing a stable trend since 2005, UV exposure is widely recognised by respondents as a cancer risk factor:

89.5%

sunbeds

95.7%

mention sunlight

20%

still believe that sunbed exposure is less harmful than sunlight

6 NUTRITION AND CANCER

Perception of risk factors and protective factors

PERCEPTION OF NUTRITION AS A CANCER RISK FACTOR: SURVEY TRENDS

Poor nutrition ranks third as a preventable cancer risk factor. In this way, since 2010, the Cancer Barometer has surveyed French people on their perceptions of risk and protective factors in respect of cancers associated with nutrition. For greater consistency with awareness and habits, questions on new food groups (i.e. wholegrains, nutritional supplements, ultra-processed foods, organic foods, and pulses) have been added in this new edition, with a view to assessing their perceptions by the population. Perceptions around fasting and nutritional supplement use have also been surveyed for the first time.

GREATER PERCEPTION OF DIET AS A RISK FACTOR

Of the 4,938 people surveyed, 91.8% perceive diet as playing an important role in the risk of developing cancer. This finding has seen a significant positive trend over the last 10 years, highlighting the increasing perception of this risk factor among the population. The risks associated with processed and red meat consumption are perceived by a majority of those surveyed (74.1% and 62.4% respectively), as are the benefits associated with fruit and vegetable consumption (62.0%). For these different food groups, a positive trend, up 26.5, 31.7, and 6.9 points respectively, has been observed. Ultra-

processed foods are also perceived by a large majority of those surveyed (88.2%) as a risk factor in cancer onset.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT NEEDED IN PERCEPTIONS OF CANCER-PROTECTING FOODS

On the other hand, the perception of the benefits associated with wholegrain and dairy produce consumption is poor (36.6% and 12.7%, respectively); the same applies to the risks associated with nutritional supplement consumption (33.6%). Awareness of the potentially protective nature of dairy product consumption has improved over the last 10 years (+13.8 points), even though it remains generally poor. The consumption of organic foods and pulses is, for its part, mostly perceived as lowering

the risk of cancer, or as having a neutral effect. These perceptions vary according to various sociodemographic factors, such as level of qualification, socioeconomic status, the impression of being informed on cancer risks associated with diet, and perceived risk of getting cancer someday.

A MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS CONSIDER THEMSELVES WELL-INFORMED, BUT...

Although 55.9% of those surveyed consider themselves well-informed about the links between diet and cancers, it seems to be important to continue to raise awareness among the population around the health benefits and risks (and cancer in particular) associated with the consumption of certain foods.

The vast majority of French people aged 15 to 85 years,

91.8%

perceive diet as having a potential role in cancer onset

However,

55.9%

some respondents consider themselves "very well-informed" or "quite well-informed" about diet-related cancer risks

The perception of protective and risk factors associated with nutrition has changed considerably since 2010:

73.9%

of French people perceive processed meat as a cancer risk factor, a figure 26.5 points up on 2010

62.9%

of French people perceive red meat as a cancer risk factor, a figure 31.7 points up on 2010

62.8%

of French people perceive fruit and vegetables as a cancer protective factor, a figure 6.9 points up on 2010

7 E-CIGARETTES

Perceptions in France?

E-CIGARETTES: A CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC

Since 2010, e-cigarettes have been claimed as alternatives to conventional cigarettes. Nevertheless, e-cigarettes are at the heart of a number of controversies, regarding their impact on health, user trajectories, and their potential for renormalising smoking and therefore tobacco use. A detailed analysis of perceptions is key in gaining a better understanding of habits, and defining public prevention and intervention strategies.

ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS OF E-CIGARETTES: METHOD USED?

The survey was conducted on a representative sample of 4,938 people. Depending on the questions and sub-samples, the number of respondents to questions on e-cigarettes varied from 4,595 to 2,292 people aged 15 to 75 years.

HIGH AWARENESS OF E-CIGARETTES AND TRENDS IN USE

99.6% of those surveyed would appear to state being aware of e-cigarettes. Over one-third have tried them, particularly men, young people, current and former smokers, as well as those with sedentary lifestyles or living in large urban areas. The prevalence of current e-cigarette use corresponds to 7.5% of the population, representing an increase of 2.1% on 2020 data. A large majority of e-cigarette users report using them to modify their tobacco use, 48% of whom in order to quit smoking.

NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF E-CIGARETTES

The respondents have a negative perception of e-cigarettes. One-third consider them to be very or extremely

harmful for health (18.5% and 10.3%, respectively), particularly women and those over 55 years of age. E-cigarettes are also mostly perceived as equally harmful, or more harmful, compared to conventional cigarettes (41.4% and 11.5%, respectively). Finally, they are perceived as less harmful by smokers and those with higher income or qualification levels. The constituents of e-cigarettes also tend to be perceived as harmful: over one-third consider the nicotine that they may contain to be very or extremely harmful; and under 28% state that flavourings are very or extremely harmful, particularly young people.

E-CIGARETTES: A CARCINOGENIC DEVICE?

As regards the perception of e-cigarettes as a cancer risk factor, one-third of respondents are confident that this statement is true, and over 46% somewhat agree that they may cause cancer; over one-third completely agree that the nicotine that they contain is potentially carcinogenic; and half of the respondents state that flavourings are a potential cause of cancer.

99.6%

of those surveyed are aware of what an e-cigarette is

79.4%

of respondents believe that e-cigarette use can cause cancer

75%

of people consider the e-cigarette to be harmful to health

52.9%

of respondents consider the e-cigarette to be just as or more harmful than conventional cigarettes

79.8%

of people consider the nicotine contained in the e-cigarette to be as harmful to health and 70% have the same opinion about flavourings

82.7%

of respondents believe that the nicotine contained in the e-cigarette can cause cancer and 73.7% think the same thing about flavourings

8

SCREENING

Perceptions and uptake of screening and HPV vaccination

A PREVENTION METHOD THAT FAILS TO CONVINCE

Although it can vary from one type of screening to another, the effectiveness of screening in terms of cancer prevention is established. In France, some national organised screening (OS) programmes (breast, cervical, colorectal) are in place. Rates of participation are too low, and current patterns, marked by decreasing screening uptake among French people, give cause for concern. The Ten-year anti-cancer strategy has set the ambitious target of carrying out one million more screening procedures by 2025, and proposes to simplify screening access. In addition, research support is aimed at developing more effective tests, and envisaging the creation of new screening

programmes, particularly for lung cancer. Following on from the 2010 edition of the Barometer, a sample of French people was surveyed on their perceptions and on their lack of screening uptake. The findings confirm that screening rates reported in France remain below European targets. Only a minority of people in the relevant age-group (43%) state that they are up-to-date in terms of colorectal cancer screening (the recommended European target is 65%). Although the majority of women state having previously been screened for breast cancer (95.6%) or cervical cancer (92.7%), fewer report being up-to-date in terms of these screening programmes (just 68.8% for breast cancer, the target being 75%; and 76.8% for cervical cancer, whereas the target is more than 85%).

PARTICIPATION IN SCREENING PROGRAMMES: VARIABLE LEVELS OF AWARENESS AND BEHAVIOURS

The multivariate analysis shows that reported screening participation is dependent on individuals' economic status. In addition, other factors are coming to light, in a more or less striking way for the various screening programmes: health and cancer risk perceptions, age or tobacco consumption; marital and family status also have an influence on screening uptake. The vast majority of those surveyed report being aware of outcomes of papillomavirus (HPV) infections, but still have difficulty identifying the associated cancers, except for cervical cancer. Awareness of the advice to vaccinate boys continues to be poor (36.3% of people). An overwhelming majority of smokers state that they are willing to

participate in potential lung cancer screening; this willingness is also associated with the perception of cancer risk.

EXISTING DRIVERS FOR ACTION AND PROSPECTS IN TERMS OF SCREENING

While the Cancer Barometer illustrates that the screening participation rates observed in France are far from reaching European or national targets, it also helps identify barriers to participation in screening programmes, and underpin their understanding. Similarly, it helps highlight drivers for action to increase rates of screening uptake and participation, led by the key role of healthcare professionals in the implementation of prevention interventions, which must be devised with a view to meeting the specific needs of the most vulnerable cohorts.

68.8%

representing the majority of women aged **50 to 74 years** report that their mammogram-based breast cancer screening was up-to-date, which is **18.7 points down** on 2010

43%

of people aged **50 to 74 years** reported that their colorectal cancer screening was up-to-date

33.4%

of men aged **over 50 years** reported having previously undergone prostate cancer screening. In 2010, this rate was **18.2 points higher**

92.7%

of women aged **25 to 65 years** report having previously undergone cervical cancer screening in their lifetime

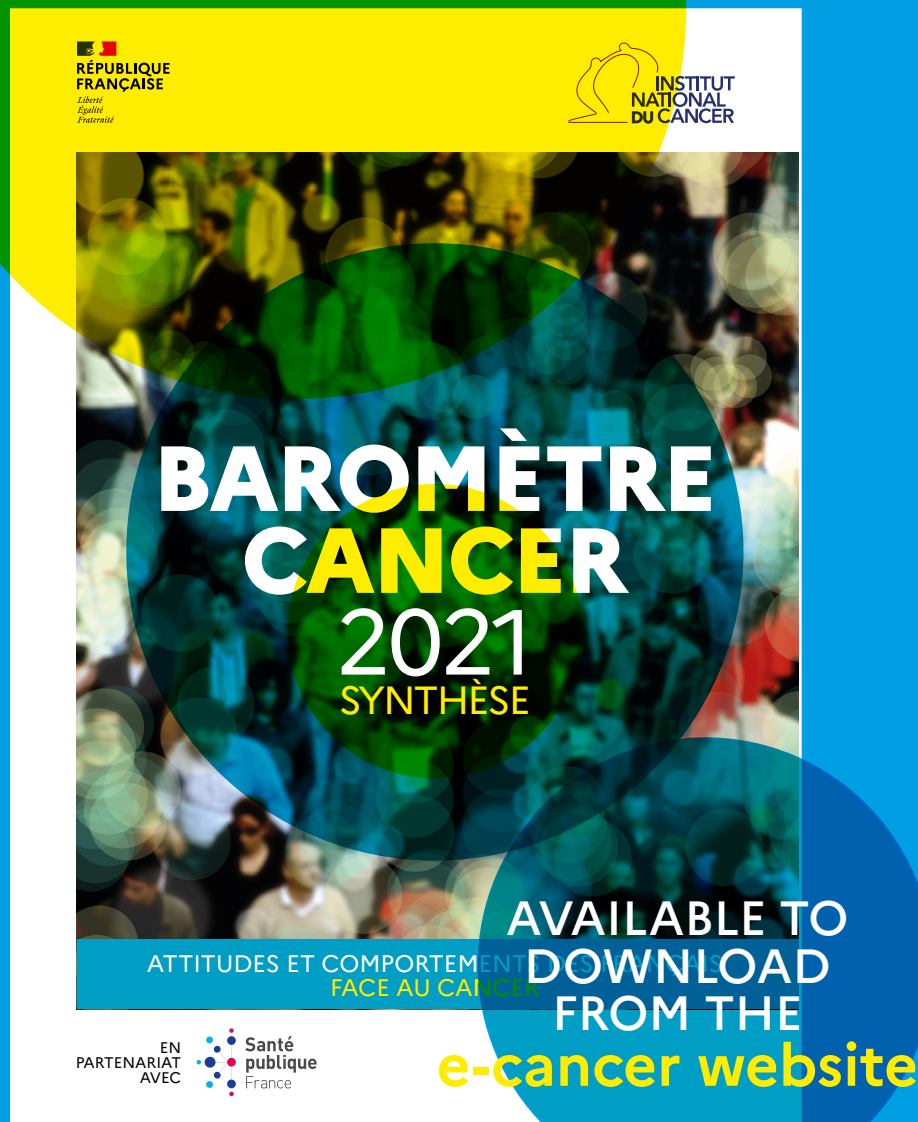
76.5%

of women aged **15 to 75 years** are aware of HPV infection, versus **only 47.6% of men**

81.5%

of tobacco users report being in favour of participating in potential lung cancer screening

CANCER BAROMETER 2021



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