

8 QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS: SMOKING

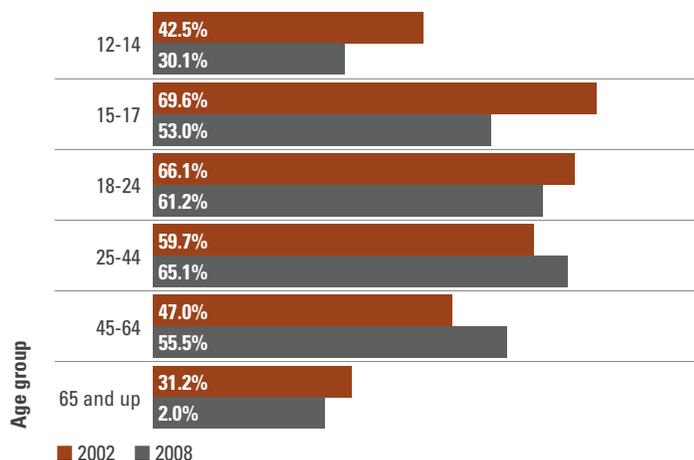
Chapter 8 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS, 2008) presents the situation of smoking among youth and adults in the First Nations communities of the Quebec region. This is a summary of the information included in Chapter 8. Therefore, it does not include all the knowledge covered by the survey, and may be open to different interpretations. To have a complete understanding of the results, the reader is invited to consult the entire chapter.

Smoking has been a major public health issue in Quebec for about two decades. However, little is known about the factors associated with this phenomenon among the First Nations population in the Quebec region. This summary of Chapter 8 of the RHS 2008 addresses tobacco usage, and provides a picture of current smokers and non-smokers.

Global picture of tobacco usage

The survey data show that 55.5% of survey respondents 12 and up reported being current smokers¹ at the time of the survey and 21.2% said they were ex-smokers. Figure 1 presents a comparison of data on tobacco usage in surveys from 2002 and 2008. There was a slight decline in the proportion of smokers among the 15-17 age group, but a slight increase among adults aged 45-64.

Figure 1: Prevalence of tobacco usage based on age, individuals aged 12 and up, 2002/2008 comparison

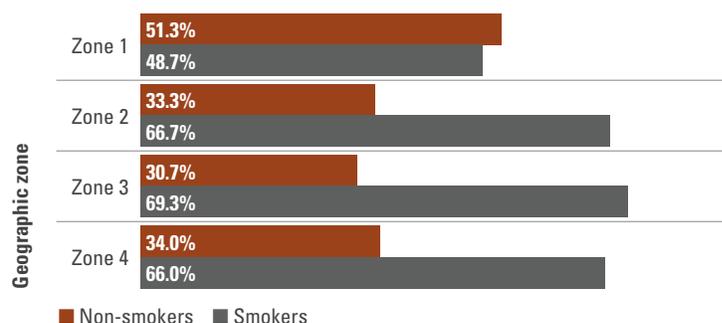


In 2008, the lowest proportion of smokers is among adults 65 and up (27.0%) while the highest is in the 25-44 age group (65.1%), who also have the highest proportion of regular smokers, 50.4%.

In 2008 as in 2002, we also note a difference in terms of tobacco usage based on gender. For each of these years, there is a greater proportion of smokers among men (58.2% and 56.9%, respectively) than among women (52.6% and 53.7%, respectively).

As shown in Figure 2, tobacco usage varies according to the community's geographic isolation. In fact, the proportion of smokers reaches its peak in zone 3 (69.3%) and in zones 2 and 4 (66.7% and 66.0%, respectively). As for zone 1, the proportion of non-smokers is significantly lower than that of non-smokers.

Figure 2: Distribution of individuals aged 12 and up, based on smoking status and geographic zone (N=22,550)



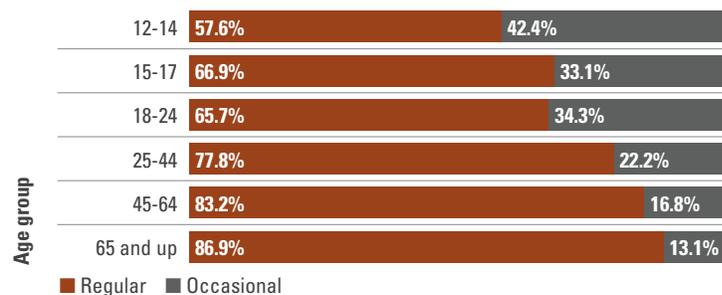
RHS 2008 data indicate that about one in three non-smokers is exposed to second-hand smoke. Regarding children, 75.9% live in homes where they are exposed to second-hand smoke, and 52.7% of mothers reported being exposed to second-hand smoke during their pregnancy. Furthermore, over half of women who said they were pregnant at the time of the survey reported smoking cigarettes.

Picture of current smokers

The average age of smoking initiation varies by age and gender. Specifically, women start smoking earlier than men, regardless of the age group. While the average age of initiation to smoking is 20.8 years for those aged 65 and up, it decreases to 11.7 years for respondents aged 12-14.

As shown in Figure 3, more than half (57.6%) of young smokers aged 12-14 are regular smokers. This proportion increases with the age of respondents, and reaches its highest level among respondents 65 years and up, at 86.9%.

Figure 3: Distribution of smokers aged 12 and up based on smoking habits and age (N = 12,505)

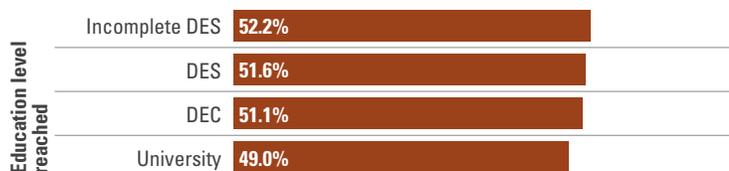


RHS 2008 data show an association between smoking and income levels among people aged 18 and up. The highest proportion of adult smokers (57.5%) is found in households earning less than \$20,000 per year, while we find the lowest proportion (42.9%) in households earning more than \$70,000.

¹ For the purpose of this chapter, the smoker's category includes all individuals who say that they smoke daily or occasionally. No distinction is made based on the number of cigarettes smoked every day.

Figure 4 shows a similar trend in regard to the association between smoking and education level. According to the survey data, tobacco usage decreases slightly as education level increases among adult smokers aged 18 and up.

Figure 4: Proportion of adult smokers based on education (N=1,297)

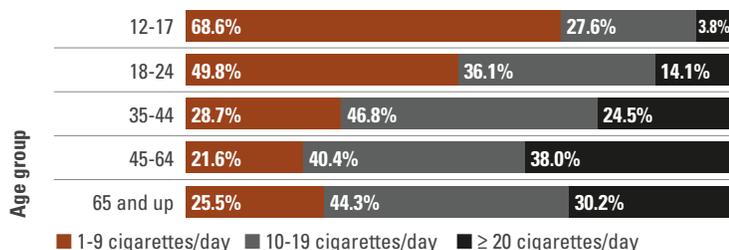


The results of the data analysis relating to the under 18 age group indicate that the proportion of smokers increases with education. 27.5% of young people who have not completed primary school reported smoking cigarettes compared to 100% of those who completed professional high school.

With respect to the number of cigarettes smoked, the data indicate that one male smoker out of three consumes 20 or more cigarettes per day (34.1%), double the proportion of women (17.5%). Women are also more likely than men to smoke less than 10 cigarettes per day (42.0% against 24.1%).

As shown in Figure 5, adults aged 45-64 displayed the highest proportion (38.0%) of those smoking 20 cigarettes or more per day. For their part, young smokers aged 12-17 comprise the highest proportion (68.6%) of regular users smoking 1-9 cigarettes per day.

Figure 5: Distribution of regular smokers aged 12 and up, based on the average number of cigarettes smoked per day and age (N=9,443)



Well-being and smoking

In relation to smoking based on the feeling of balance, smokers are about twice as likely than non-smokers to feel some of the time or almost none of the time in balance physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. A statistically significant association was observed between the issues of suicide and smoking. Among respondents aged 12 and up, those who have already considered suicide in their life were twice as likely to be found among smokers compared with non-smokers.

Picture of current non-smokers

Representing 45% of respondents aged 12 and up, non-smokers are divided between 52.4% of people who have never smoked and 47.6% who are ex-smokers. In this group, there is a greater proportion of regular or occasional smokers among women compared to men.

In Figure 6, individuals aged 45-64 and 65 and up show the highest proportions of regular ex-smokers while adults aged 18-24 and 25-44 have the highest proportions of occasional ex-smokers.

Figure 6: Distribution of current non-smokers aged 12 and up, based on status and age (N=10,020)

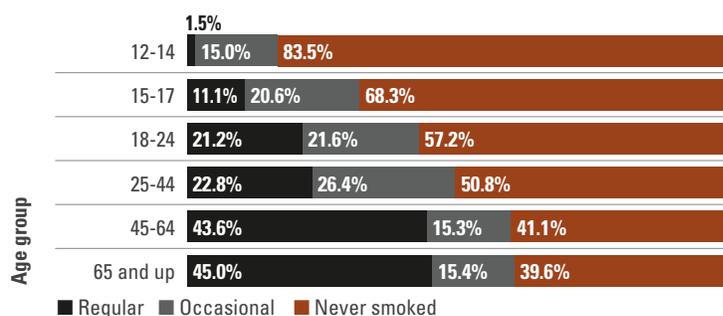


Table 1 shows a comparison by age group, of ex-smokers who reported having quit smoking before the age of 18. Adults aged 45-64, both women and men, have the youngest average smoking cessation age.

Table 1: Average smoking cessation age for non-smokers aged 12 and up, based on gender and age (N=851)

Respondents' age	Women	Men
	Average cessation age	Average cessation age
65 and up	14.3 years	–
45-64	11.2 years	12.1 years
25-44	15.4 years	14.6 years
18-24	15.3 years	16.7 years
12-17	13.7 years	13.0 years

The three main reasons offered by ex-smokers for having stopped smoking are:

- > choosing a healthy lifestyle, for 49.3% of respondents (45% among women and 53.8% among men);
- > awareness of the ill effects of cigarettes on their health, 27.4% of respondents (25% among women and 30% among men);
- > because of a health condition, 19.8% of respondents (21.4% among women and 18.1% among men).

It should be noted that the method used by the majority (80.3%) of ex-smokers to quit smoking is "cold turkey or will power." The second most common method is the use of nicotine replacement (patches) for 7.1% of respondents.

Finally, this summary provides an overview of Chapter 8 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey. For more details on the survey results, the full chapter is available at the following link: <http://www.cssspnql.com/docs/centre-de-documentation/chapitre-8-tabagisme-eng-v2.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

