



Survey on Alcohol, Drugs and other Addictions in people over 64 years of age in Spain (ESDAM) 2019/2020

Summary Report

For the first time in Spain, a survey related to addictions has been conducted focusing on people over 64 years of age, called ESDAM. It has been carried out simultaneously with the Survey on Alcohol and Other Drugs in Spain (EDADES 2019/2020), promoted and financed by the Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs, with the collaboration of the Autonomous Communities and Cities.

Methodology

The Survey on Alcohol, Drugs and other Addictions in Elderly People over 64 years of age in Spain, ESDAM 2019/2020 was based on 1,443 valid questionnaires answered by the population over 64 years of age residing in households (not institutionalized) in Spain. The sample was collected throughout Spain and is nationally representative. ESDAM includes different modules, which collect information on alcohol, tobacco, hypnotosedatives, opioid analgesics and illegal substances. It also collects information on gambling and Internet use, as well as risk perception in relation to the consumption of psychoactive substances.

The fieldwork was conducted between February and March 2020, prior to the declaration of the State of Alarm for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Main updated results. ESDAM 2019/20 survey.

In terms of **past-year use**, alcohol is the most commonly consumed substance (58.6%), followed by hypnotosedatives (27.8%), tobacco (12.8%) and opioid analgesics (12.3%). According to age, alcohol and tobacco consumption was lower after 75 years of age, but the use of hypnotosedatives and opioid analgesics was higher. According to sex, women consume less alcohol and tobacco but more hypnotosedatives and opioid analgesics than men.



If we consider **daily consumption in the last month**, the most frequent consumptions are hypnotosedatives and alcohol, both with a prevalence of around 20%. They are followed by tobacco, with a prevalence of around 10%, and, finally, opioid analgesics whose daily consumption does not reach 5%. According to age, between 65 and 74 years of age, alcohol consumption is the most common, and from that age onwards, hypnotosedatives. By sex, alcohol consumption is most common among men and hypnotosedatives among women.

Regarding **alcohol consumption**, 58.6% of people over 64 years of age have consumed alcoholic beverages in the last year, 46.7% have done so in the last month and 19.0% on a daily basis. In general, alcohol consumption is more common among men than women. In addition, 2.8% of this population has been drunk in the last year and 0.9% in the last month. The most common drinks used were wine (30.5%) and beer (17.7%), followed by far by drinks with higher alcohol content such as vermouth, liqueurs and mixed drinks, each consumed by less than 3% of this population.

Regarding **tobacco use**, 52.9% of persons over 64 years of age have smoked at some time in their lives, 12.8% have smoked in the last year, 11.8% in the last month, and 9.8% smoke daily. In this age group, the majority of former smokers have quit. By sex and age, tobacco use is more common in men than in women, as well as in the 65-74 years old.

Regarding the **use of hypnotosedatives**, 30.6% of people over 64 years of age have used them at some time in their lives, 27.8% in the last year, 24.8% in the last month, and 22.2% on a daily basis. Using hypnotosedatives is more common among women than men (approximately twice as many), and those who take them daily have been using them for almost 21 years on average. Finally, 2.3% have used hypnotosedatives without a prescription at some time in their lives.

With regard to **opioid analgesics**, 22.8% of persons over 64 years of age have used them at some time in life, 12.3% in the last year, 6.7% in the last month, and 4.4% used them daily. Of this population, 1.4% reported having used opioid analgesics without a prescription at some time in their lives.

As for **illegal substances**, only lifetime use of cannabis is worth mentioning, with a prevalence of 4.6% (7.1% in men and 2.8% in women). The use of other illegal substances is quite rare in this population.

Regarding **non-substance addictive behaviours**, such as gambling, 68.4% of people over 64 years of age have done so in the last year (non-internet, internet or both), this being somewhat more common in men (72.6%) than in women (65.2%). In this population, non-internet gambling is more common, both in men and in women and only 2.4% of them have used internet gambling.



Finally, people over 64 years of age show a **high risk perception** to most addictive behaviors, especially those related to tobacco and opioid analgesics. At the other extreme, the behaviors they consider less risky are the consumption of more than 1-2 beers/glasses of wine per day and the consumption of hypnotosedatives once or less per month.

Conclusions

The psychoactive substances most commonly consumed by the population over 64 years of age are those that are legal tender, i.e., alcohol, tobacco, hypnotosedatives and opioid analgesics.

Among all substances, men's use of alcohol and women's use of hypnotosedatives stand out. They are consumed daily by about one third of men and women respectively. In addition, men are much more likely than women to use alcohol and tobacco on a daily basis. However, women are much more likely than men to use hypnotosedatives and opioid analgesics on a daily basis. By age, the most commonly used substance on a daily basis is alcohol in the 65-74 age group, and hypnotosedatives from the age of 75 onwards.

In general, this population has a lower consumption of alcohol (except for daily consumption) and tobacco than the population aged 15-64, but a higher consumption of hypnotosedatives and opioid analgesics. Also, the use of illicit drugs is scarce beyond the age of 64.

Finally, nearly seven out of ten people over 64 years of age reported gambling in the past year. In this population, gambling is predominantly non-internet gambling.