

\* Santé publique France, the French national public health agency

# Effectiveness of the French *Mois sans tabac* on quit attempts in the first year of Covid-19: a population-based study

## BACKGROUND

*Mois sans tabac* is a social marketing initiative inspired by the British *Stoptober*. Organized in France since 2016, it invites smokers to quit smoking for 30 days in November and to register on a website.

In 2020, the number of registrations has dramatically decreased compared to 2019 (from 203,892 to 126,568). This decrease occurred in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and of a second national lockdown in the fall of 2020.

## OBJECTIVES

To describe the effectiveness of *Mois sans tabac* 2020 on 24-hour quit attempts (QA) in the last quarter of the year, and sociodemographic factors associated with QA.

## METHODS

**Source:** Santé publique France 2021 Health Barometer, a general population survey carried out by phone using random digit dialing.

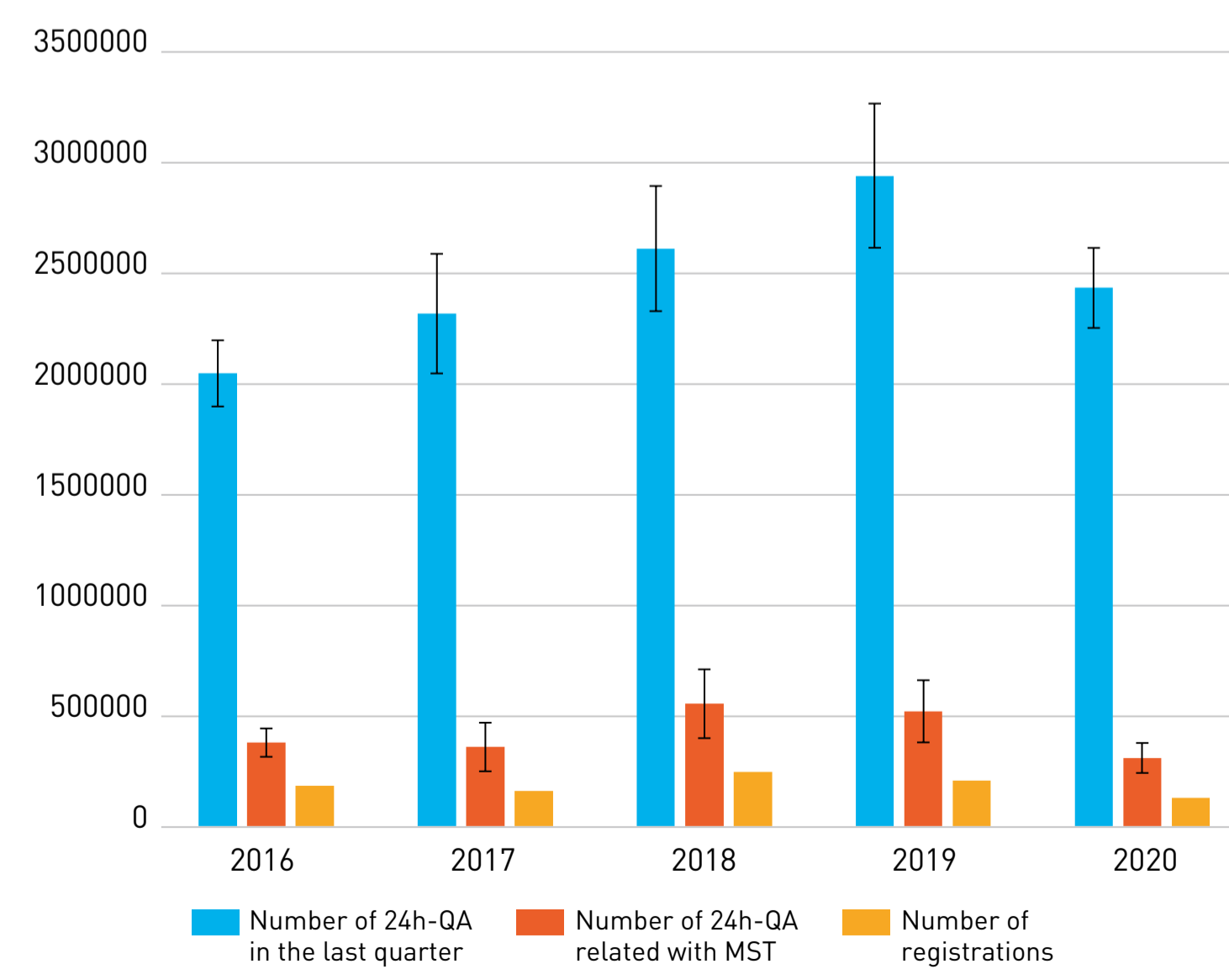
**Sample:** 5,028 respondents aged 18-75, who were daily smokers just before the campaign (recoded retrospectively).

**Analysis:** Sociodemographic factors associated with QA according to self-reported relation with *Mois sans tabac* were assessed using a multinomial logistic regression.

## RESULTS

- About one fifth of smokers (19.9%) reported a QA in the last quarter of 2020 and 2.5% attributed it to the campaign. Both figures were significantly lower than those observed in 2019 (respectively 24.4% and 4.3%) and the rate of directly attributable QA was the lowest since 2016.
- QA, related or not to *Mois sans tabac*, were associated with younger age and higher education.
- QA attributable to *Mois sans tabac* were less frequent among occupations such as farmers, craftspeople, retailers and business owners.

**Figure |** Number of quit attempts in the last quarter, number of quit attempts related with *Mois sans tabac* according to self-report and number of registrations on *Mois sans tabac* website during the 2016-2020 period



Source: Health Barometers, 2017-2021, Santé publique France.  
Scope: 18-75 years-old, France  
24h-QA: 24-hour quit attempt; MST: *Mois sans tabac*

**Table |** Proportion (%) of smokers having made a 24-hour quit attempt in the last quarter of 2020, according to self-reported relation with *Mois sans tabac*, by sociodemographic characteristics. Relative risk ratios and 95% confidence intervals from a multinomial logistic regression with no quit attempt as reference

	QA in the last quarter of 2020 not related with <i>Mois sans tabac</i>			QA in the last quarter of 2020 related with <i>Mois sans tabac</i>		
	%	RRR	95% CI	%	RRR	95% CI
<b>Sex</b>	**					
Male (ref.) (n=2,611)	19.0	1.0		2.5	1.0	
Female (n=2,417)	15.5	0.9	[0.8-1.0]	2.6	1.0	[0.7-1.5]
<b>Age group</b>	***			*		
18-24 year-olds (ref.) (n=523)	24.8	1.0		4.2	1.0	
25-34 year-olds (n=903)	20.5	0.8	[0.6-1.0]	3.5	0.8	[0.4-1.4]
35-44 year-olds (n=1,045)	16.1	0.6***	[0.4-0.7]	2.1	0.5*	[0.3-0.9]
45-54 year-olds (n=1,145)	14.4	0.5***	[0.4-0.6]	2.0	0.6	[0.3-1.0]
55-64 year-olds (n=960)	15.1	0.5***	[0.4-0.6]	1.1	0.4*	[0.2-0.8]
65-75 year-olds (n=452)	13.0	0.5***	[0.4-0.7]	2.7	0.6	[0.3-1.4]
<b>Education level</b>	***					
Less than high school graduate (ref.) (n=1,918)	14.3	1.0		2.1	1.0	
High school graduate (n=1,195)	20.5	1.3*	[1.1-1.6]	2.9	1.4	[0.9-2.3]
College graduate (n=1,915)	21.5	1.5***	[1.2-1.8]	3.0	1.8*	[1.1-2.9]
<b>Income level per consumption unit</b>						
1st tercile (low income) (ref.) (n=1,828)	16.0	1.0		2.6	1.0	
2nd tercile (intermediate income) (n=1,609)	17.1	1.0	[0.9-1.3]	2.7	1.0	[0.6-1.5]
3rd tercile (high income) (n=1,293)	20.5	1.2	[1.0-1.5]	2.1	0.8	[0.4-1.3]
Don't know/Refusal to answer (n=298)	18.4	1.2	[0.9-1.6]	2.0	1.2	[0.6-2.4]
<b>Employment status</b>						
Employed (ref.) (n=3,137)	17.7	1.0		2.7	1.0	
Unemployed, looking for a job (n=581)	18.4	1.1	[0.9-1.4]	1.9	0.7	[0.4-1.4]
Student, retired, other situation (n=1,310)	15.8	1.0	[0.8-1.2]	2.5	0.9	[0.6-1.6]
<b>(Last) Occupation of the respondent or of the household reference person</b>	*					
Farmer, craftsperson, retailer or business owner (n=438)	17.9	1.0	[0.8-1.4]	1.0	0.3*	[0.1-0.9]
Manager or senior-level professional occupation (n=734)	23.6	1.1	[0.9-1.5]	2.8	0.7	[0.4-1.4]
Professional/intermediate occupation (n=1,337)	18.7	1.1	[0.9-1.4]	2.7	0.9	[0.6-1.5]
Clerical worker (ref.) (n=1,248)	15.6	1.0		3.3	1.0	
Manual worker (n=1,199)	16.4	1.0	[0.8-1.2]	2.1	0.9	[0.5-1.6]

QA, quit attempt; RRR, relative risk ratio; 95% CI, confidence interval; ref., reference group in the regression. Chi-square independence tests for bivariate analyses between QA and sociodemographic characteristics. Wald tests for RRR (\*\*p < 0.001; \*p < 0.01; \*p < 0.05).

## DISCUSSION

- Decrease in QA related with *Mois sans tabac* may be partly explained by a fatigue from the ubiquitous health messages and a lower visibility of the anti-smoking media campaign in the Covid-19 context.
- The lack of face-to-face or group activities usually set up for *Mois sans tabac*, due to lockdown, may have contributed to a differentiated impact by socio-economic level.

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**Conflicts of interest:** None

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