

## HBSC and ESPAD in France: a marriage of convenience but not only!

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### OBJECTIVES

France has been collecting HBSC data since 1994 (2002 at national level) and ESPAD data since 1999. Initially, the respective teams leading the two surveys were ignoring each other and even competing for funding and access to schools.

It is not easy in a country to conduct two surveys showing strong similarities.

Principal investigators have to face with:

- Funding difficulties (same public funders);
- Organising the collection of several thousand questionnaires in almost identical terms only one year apart;
- Misunderstanding of contributors (e.g. headmasters) about the obligation to carry out these "similar" surveys one year apart;
- Sometimes differences in data analysis, question wording...

From 2006 onwards, collaboration was gradually implemented and materialised in 2010 and 2011 by a cooperation both in the implementation of these surveys (harmonisation of sampling, indicators, field work...), but also in the analysis and publication of results.

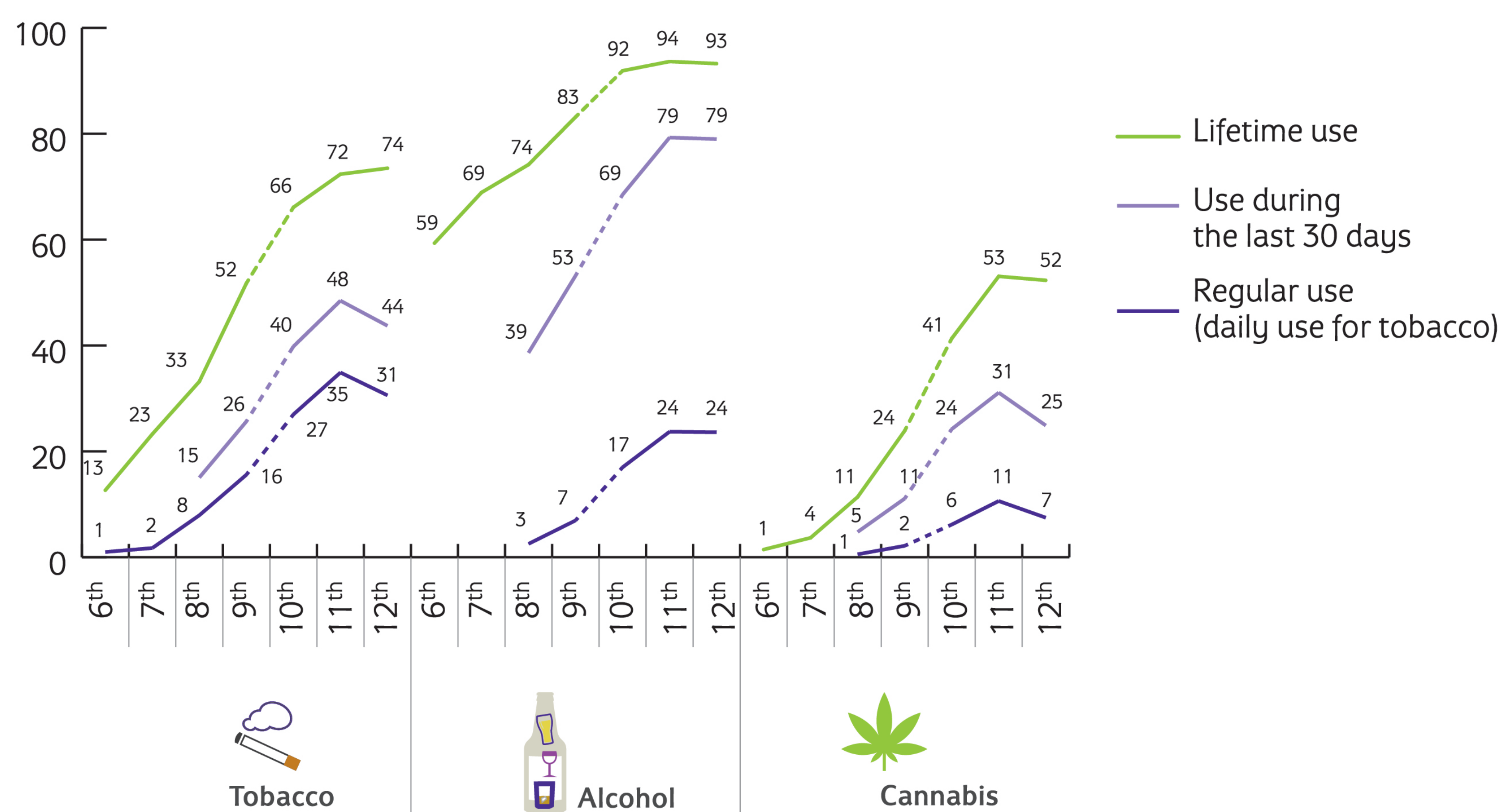
Beyond improving the comparability between both surveys, this collaboration led to the publication in France for the first time of a full overview of drug use by grades in junior (HBSC) and senior (ESPAD) high-schools (Spilka and Le Nézet, 2013).

These cooperative efforts led to a new survey framework, based on a representative sample both by grade and age cohort, so that these two surveys offer a continuous monitoring of drug use over teenager years. The second aim is to take better account of school context (grades and types of school) which plays probably a significant part in the spreading of drug use among teenagers.

This decision to oversample did not have a significant financial impact although this required larger samples than those imposed by survey's methodologies (e.g. in ESPAD 2011, the target population was only students born in 1995). In France, sampling one age cohort requires to include several grades because students can be forced to repeat grades.



Figure 1. Prevalence of use of cigarettes, alcohol and cannabis by grade in 2010-2011 (%)



Source: HBSC 2010, use by the OFDT, ESPAD 2011 "Lycée years", OFDT-INSERM-MEN

### CONCLUSIONS

As showed in figure opposite, we are now able to study the timing of various substances dissemination and to identify the most appropriate classes to conduct prevention: 8th and 9th grades appear to be pivotal years.

In practice, it seems easier to identify 6<sup>th</sup> graders students than 11-year olds and our results now provide the opportunity to implement health promotion interventions in a more operational framework.

Last, for stakeholders and partners, this work in common between these two large surveys give a guarantee of reliability and cost-effectiveness particularly relevant in times of financial crisis.

This partnership was renewed with the 2014 data-collection wave of HBSC 2014 and the sixth wave of ESPAD (2015).

### Affiliations

- 1 French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (OFDT), Saint-Denis, France
- 2 INSERM U1178 Paris
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- 4 Medical department of the Toulouse board of education
- 5 Association for the Development of HBSC

### Methodology

Results are presented here as if longitudinal, which is not the case in the context of these two cross-sectional surveys. It is likely, however, that the timing of substances dissemination partly reflects their true distribution during adolescence.

### Reference

Spilka S., Le Nézet O., 2013, Alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use during the "lycée years", *Tendances*, OFDT, n° 89, 8 p.