Trends in smoking and e-cigarette use among 15–16-year-olds in Ireland, 2015–2024

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BACKGROUND

In 2019, results from the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD Ireland) indicated a halt in the decline in smoking among 15–16-year-olds and an increase in male smoking, raising concerns about progress towards TobaccoFree Ireland (TFI) goals.

METHODS

STUDY DESIGN

Nationally representative ESPAD surveys

YEARS

2015 • 2019 • 2024

PARTICIPANTS

15–16-year-old students

SAMPLE SIZE

2015: n = 1,472
2019: n = 1,949
2024: n = 1,844

OUTCOMES

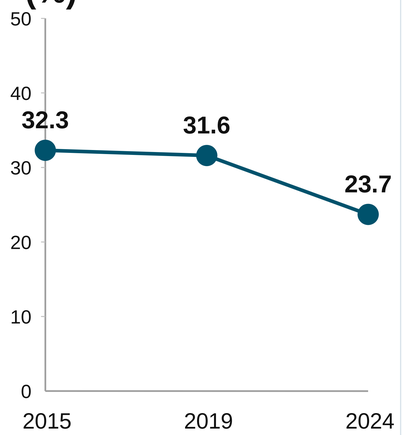
Ever smoking
Current smoking
Ever e-cigarette use
Current e-cigarette use
Smoking status at first e-cigarette use

AIM

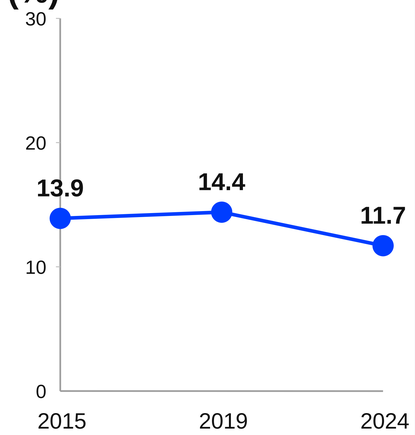
1. To examine smoking and e-cigarette trends among 15–16-year-olds in Ireland between 2015 and 2024.
2. To assess whether the 2019 halt in declining smoking and increase in male smoking persisted in this age group.

RESULTS

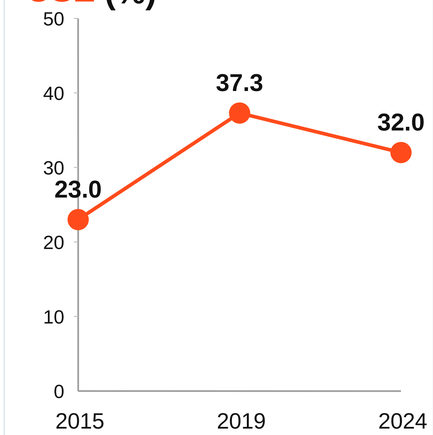
1 EVER SMOKING (%)



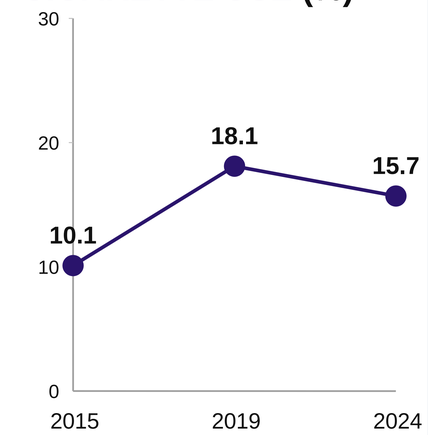
2 CURRENT SMOKING (%)



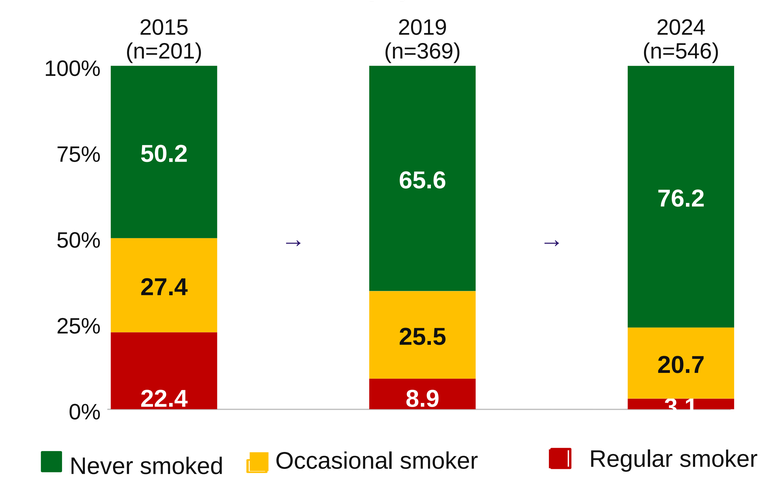
3 EVER E-CIGARETTE USE (%)



4 CURRENT E-CIGARETTE USE (%)



5 SMOKING STATUS AT FIRST E-CIGARETTE USE (%)



CONCLUSIONS

Among 15–16-year-olds, the 2019 halt in declining smoking did not persist in 2024; both ever and current smoking resumed a downward trend.

However, the TFI goal of 5% prevalence will not be met.

E-cigarette use was substantially higher in 2024 than in 2015, with increasing use among 15–16-year-olds who had never smoked.

Findings indicate a shift towards e-cigarette use, highlighting the importance of including e-cigarettes in tobacco control policies

CONTACT

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