

# Continuation and diversification of drug use pathways in prison

## A French literature review

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# Background

- **A large literature in France about the topic of drugs in prison**
- **Lots of quantitative data on levels of drug uses at the entry into prison and some on levels of drug uses within the prison. But they are mostly old and regional**
- **Scattered and fragmented data on drug use pathways**

# Methods

- **French literature review**
- **Systematic for the last ten years and narrative before 2013**
- **It includes qualitative data from several sociological surveys realised by the OFDT between 2015 and 2021**

# Results: quantitative data

Survey	Scope	Consumption of drugs before incarceration						Consumption of drugs during the incarceration					
		Tabacco	Cannabis	Alcohol	Cocaine/ Crack	Opiates	Precription drugs	Tabacco	Cannabis	Alcohol	Cocaine/ Crack	Opiates	Precription drugs
DREES (2003)	National	80%	29.80%	31%	7.7%	6.50%	5.40%	na	na	na	na	na	na
Liancourt (2011)	Local on the scale of one establishment	81%	53%	69%	22% (cocaine only?)	18.90% (heroin only?)	12.60%	67,00%	38,20%	19%	7,10%	8,1% (heroin only?)	15,50%
ORS Picardie (2015)	Local on the scale of one region	84,00%	37.90%	70,00%	6.10%	9.30%	2.70%	na	na	na	na	na	na
Lyon Corbas (2013)	Local on the scale of one establishment	na	na	na	na	na	na	74,00%	36,80%	30,40%	10,30%	7,70%	12,30%
COSMOS (2019)	Local on the scale of one region (Pays de la Loire)	na	49%	73%	16.50%	8.90% (heroin only)	3.50%	na	37%	2,10%	1,90%	1,1% (heroin)	10,40%
Nord and Pas-de-Calais (2022)	Local on the scale of one region (Nord-pas-de-Calais)	na	45.60%	62.10%	na	9.40%	nd	na	na	na	na	na	na

Sources : compilation produced by the OFDT on the basis of a littérature

na: data not available

# Results: quantitative data

- Cigarettes and cannabis are more available in prison than other drugs
- Transfers of consumption
- Transformation of consumption patterns

# Results: Cosmos study, different user profiles

- Profile 1: older prisoners. high probability of alcohol consumption. During the incarceration: high probability of stopping alcohol consumption, without initiating use of other psychoactive substances.
- Profile 2: middle-aged prisoners. high probability of alcohol and tobacco use. During the incarceration: high probability of heavy tobacco use, high probability of stopping alcohol and cannabis consumption.
- Profile 3: higher psychotropic drug consumption probability (excluding OMT). High daily alcohol consumption, occasional use of cannabis and cocaine. During the incarceration: high probability of psychotropic medication use.
- Profile 4: younger prisoners. very high probability of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis consumption. During the incarceration: high probability to stop alcohol and of heavy tobacco and cannabis use.
- Profile 5: poly-users profile. High probability of OMT use. During the incarceration: non-negligible probability to continue all illicit drugs (in particular cocaine and heroin). OMT had a high probability of being retained and even initiated, and psychotropic medications had a high probability of being initiated.

# Results: qualitative data – tobacco use pathways in prison

- 80% of entrants and detainees smoke, but the reasons change with the incarceration
- Dealing with uncertainty
- Give a rhythm to the day and fight against boredom
- The socialisation function of tobacco

# Results: qualitative data – tobacco use pathways in prison

- “Sequenced” pathways
- “Linear” pathways
- “Bottom up” pathways
- “Top down” pathways





# Conclusion

- Drug use continues in prison despite the criminal prohibition and the level of control, but is evolving
- These evolutions depend on the substance: tobacco and cannabis consumption can remain at level close to those found among prison entrants. Alcohol, cocaine and heroin use are decreasing very significantly, while psychotropic drug use is increasing
- There are transfers of consumption and of routes of administration
- A recent survey distinguishes two opposite profiles: young prisoners who smoke joints, use tobacco and cocaine before incarceration, and continue to use tobacco and cannabis in prison, and polyconsumers, older, who increase their consumption of psychotropic drugs in prison
- Qualitative data highlight several pathways: some users succeed to stop using, while others reinforce consumption, initiate new dependencies and contribute to psychological and social insecurity

# REITOX member

**OFDT is the French focal point for the EMCDDA.**

OFDT is a member of the European Information Network on Drugs and Drug Addiction (REITOX).

