

# FACT SHEET

## WATERPIPE (HOOKAH) SMOKING

### BACKGROUND AND RISK OF WATERPIPE SMOKING

The origin of waterpipe use lies in India and the eastern Mediterranean. The past dozens of years its use in the Western world has increased due to immigration, and around 1990 after introduction of flavored waterpipe tobacco. Smoking a waterpipe is considered a fun activity, a way to socialize. Ordinarily this takes place at home or in special cafes ('shisha-lounges'). There are several ways to smoke waterpipe, for instance by using tobacco (leaves), herbal or fruit molasses, and aromatic steam stones. There also are different ways to heat the waterpipe. Charcoal is the mostly used heat source, however the waterpipe can also be heated with electric coals.

When using the waterpipe harmful substances are released, for instance nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide; these are produced by the tobacco as well as by the heat source (charcoal). The risks of waterpipe smoking pertain mostly to lung, heart, and cardiovascular diseases. Studies about the health effects, however, are subject to methodological limitations.

### WATERPIPE USE IN THE DUTCH CONTEXT

Most waterpipe users are teens and young adults. Use is mostly occasional.

#### Youths

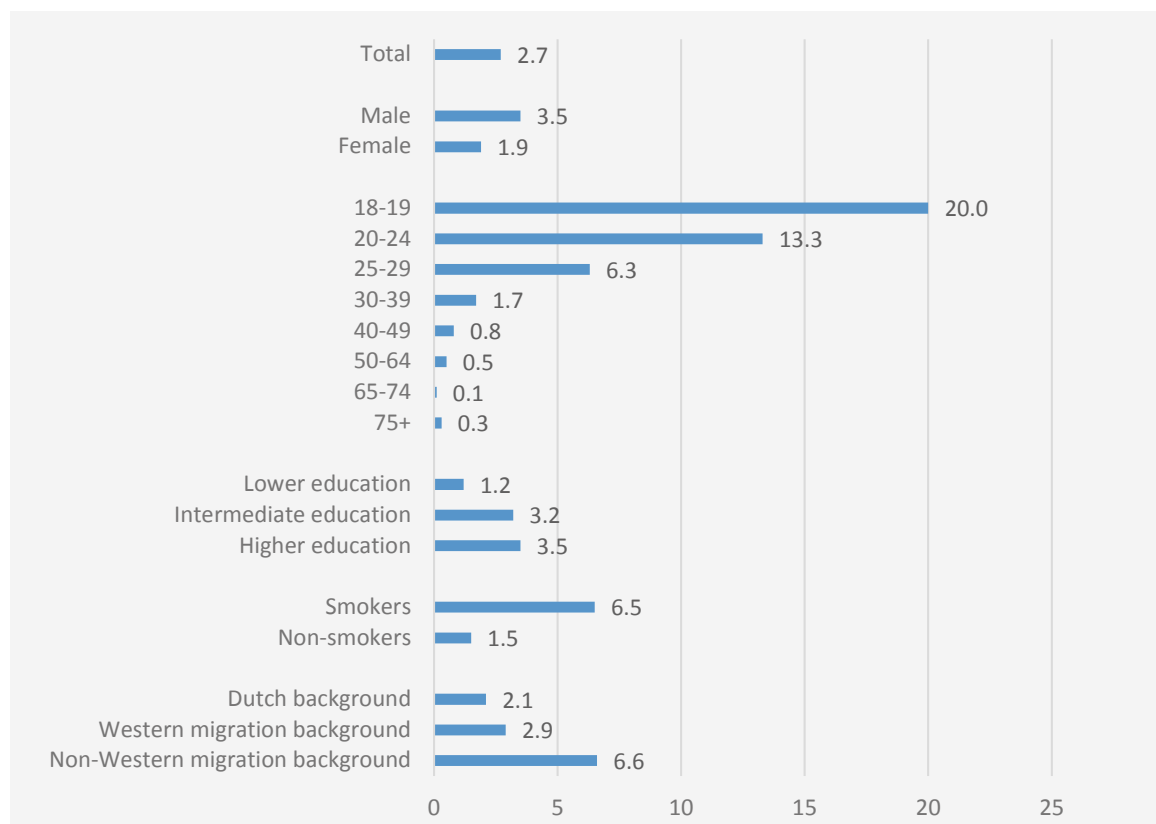
- The 2015 *Basic Survey Among 12 through 16 Year Old High School Students* (in Dutch: *Peilstationsonderzoek*) shows that almost one quarter of 12 - 16 year olds (22.5%) has ever smoked a waterpipe, and 6.9% did so the previous month.

- High school students with a preparatory secondary vocational education (in Dutch: VMBO-b) used waterpipe more often (32.8%) than high school students with a pre-university education (in Dutch: VWO) (15.3%). This also applies to last month's use: respectively 11.2% and 3.3%.
- The monthly prevalence of smoking a waterpipe is highest among Turkish (15.2%), Surinamese (11.3%), and Antillean/Aruban high school students (8.5%), and is lower among Dutch (6.3%) and Moroccan students (5.6%).

#### Adults

- The Additional module "substances" of the 2016 Lifestyle Monitor (in Dutch: 'Leefstijlmonitor') (LSM-A Midden/Leefstijlmonitor, Trimbos in cooperation with CBS and RIVM, 2016) shows that out of the total population of 18 years or older 5.8% smoked waterpipe 'some time' and 8.9% did so in the past. Therefore in total 14.7% of all adults at one point in life smoked a waterpipe.
- When asked specifically about their use in the past 12 months, 2.7% of all adults give a positive response. Graph 1 shows that past year's use is highest among men, young adults, intermediate to higher level educated people, cigarette smokers, and people with a non-Western migration background.
- Over half (55.7%) of last year's waterpipe users are also 'regular' smokers.
- Waterpipe use is mostly occasional: 94.6% of last year's users do so monthly, annually, or less often. The others, 5.4%, use the waterpipe daily or weekly.

**GRAPH 1: PREVALENCE OF LAST YEAR'S USERS (%) OF WATERPIPE IN THE POPULATION OF 18 YEARS AND OLDER, BY GENDER, AGE, EDUCATION LEVEL, SMOKING STATUS, AND ETHNICITY, IN 2016**



Source: Additional module "substances" of the 2016 Lifestyle Monitor, Trimbos Institute with CBS and RIVM, 2016.

## LEGISLATION

In the Netherlands, the Tobacco Act applies to the waterpipe if it contains tobacco. The most important regulations with regard to waterpipe tobacco smoking are: a smoking ban in public places, an advertising ban, a minimum age of 18 years for sale/purchase of waterpipe tobacco and a pictorial and textual health warning on packaging.

A textual health warning on packaging of herbal molasses without tobacco is required since 2016 and since 2017 an advertising ban and a minimum age of 18 years for sale/purchase also apply to herbal molasses without tobacco.

### NETHERLANDS EXPERTISE CENTER FOR TOBACCO CONTROL

The Netherlands Expertise Center for Tobacco Control (NET) is part of the Trimbos Institute. It develops, collates, and disseminates independent, systematically tested knowledge on tobacco control and smoking deterrence. The mission of NET is to discourage people from using tobacco, as well as informing tobacco users and non-tobacco users about the harmful effects of tobacco use and tobacco exposure. The NET also provides health professionals, scientists, and public officials with information about tobacco usage, prevention, treatment of tobacco addiction, and policy options.

## Colophon

Trimbos Institute  
PO Box 725  
3500 AS Utrecht  
The Netherlands  
Phone +31 30 297 1100

Summary of a Dutch fact sheet

### Authors

Eefje Willemsse  
Linda Springuloet  
Marc Willemsen  
Margriet van Laar

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Canon Nederland N.V.

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