

Identities

Binge-drinking and psychological stress up among young Swiss



▲ Smoking is down among young Swiss, but excessive drinking is up Keystone / Martin Ruetschi

Young people in Switzerland are generally satisfied with their lives. However, their habits have changed over the past ten years: they smoke less, have moved to the left politically and are less homophobic and racist. On the other hand, they drink more and do less sport.

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The “ Young Adult Survey Switzerland”, which was carried out among 100,000 19-year-olds between 2010 and 2019, was published on Thursday. It is the first time that trends in this age group have been observed over a ten-year period.

The study authors said the "very pleasing" picture that emerges from this decade is that of young adults who are for the most part responsible and generally satisfied with their lives.

Three-quarters of young people in 2019 said they were satisfied, a figure that remained stable over the decade.

However, the proportion of young adults with suicidal thoughts increased. The proportion of boys who thought about suicide almost doubled from 11% (in 2014/15) to 20% (in 2018/19). Risk factors for psychological stress are breaks in education as well as a low level of education. Education thus correlates with the life satisfaction of young adults.

Less than 20% of smokers

Although the satisfaction rate has remained stable, young people's habits have changed significantly. This is particularly true of smoking: in 2019, 17% of young people smoked, compared with 25% ten years earlier.

On the other hand, there has been an increase in the proportion of young people who say they drink excessively. In 2009, 10% said that they sometimes consumed five glasses of alcohol on the same occasion; this had risen to 17% in 2019.

At the same time, the number of young people doing sports has fallen from 84% to 74%.

The proportion of young people on the left of the political spectrum has risen by 6% to 34%. In addition, more young people are in the centre: 42% compared with 36% previously.

Fewer young people consider themselves to be xenophobic or homophobic. The ratios of those with xenophobic or homophobic views have fallen by around 16 and 14 percentage points respectively. In 2019, 29% considered themselves “somewhat xenophobic” and 15% “somewhat homophobic”.