

## **The Misleader of the Year 2025 is the Snus Commission**

### **Reason**

The Snus Commission has been named Misleader of the Year 2025 for its repeated misleading claims about nicotine. The Snus Commission emphasizes that white snus can help tobacco addicts reduce their tobacco use. However, statistics show that most people who use white snus are young people who have not previously used tobacco. The Snus Commission is thus contributing to making many teenagers and young adults addicted to nicotine, perhaps for the rest of their lives. This has negative consequences for the health, behavior, and finances of nicotine-dependent individuals.

The Snus Commission conveys a highly biased view of the use of white snus. The Snus Commission ignores the fact that nicotine quickly leads to addiction, especially among young people and especially among young women. Such selective information can be considered disinformation says Tomas Furmark, professor of psychology and board member of the association Vetenskap och Folkbildning (Science and Public Education).

### **Extended explanation why the Snus Commission is Misleader of year 2025**

The Snus Commission was launched in 2015 and is funded by the Snus Manufacturers Association, an association of companies in Sweden that manufacture, market, and sell snus. This is how the Snus Commission explains its relationship with the Snus Manufacturers Association:

“However, the Commission's conclusions are independent of its financiers, who have therefore not had the opportunity to participate in meetings or comment on the content of the reports.”

The purpose of the Snus Commission is said to be to combat smoking by promoting snus as a less harmful alternative. In particular, the Snus Commission has argued for white snus as a way for smokers to switch to a less harmful alternative.

White snus was launched around 2016. The nicotine dose varies between 2 and 20 milligrams per portion, but higher doses are also available (Testfakta, Tobaksfakta, see links below). The dose is often higher than brown snus, which is usually in the range of 6-10 mg per portion. The Snus Commission has also advocated a cap on the nicotine dose. However, even nicotine in lower doses is addictive.

Nicotine has several negative health effects. First and foremost, nicotine can quickly lead to addiction in users, especially young people. Nicotine causes increased heart rate and blood pressure, sores, blisters, and other damage to the oral mucosa (see link to Tobaksfakta below). Nicotine can affect the development of the brain and lungs in fetuses. Addiction causes withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, difficulty sleeping, restlessness, depression, and increased appetite (diagnostic criteria according to DSM-5). In addition, withdrawal can cause memory impairment, nightmares, and weight gain.

According to the latest figures from CAN, the Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, presented in November 2025 (Ramstedt, CAN report 238, 2025), sales of white snus have increased significantly – by 20% from 2023 to 2024 and by 180% from 2021 to 2024. During the same period, tobacco smoking has remained relatively constant and sales of brown snus have decreased by approximately 10%. It was not clear what proportion of white snus users had previously used brown

snus or who smoked or used multiple forms of nicotine. It is difficult to interpret the figures in any other way than that total nicotine use increased during the period 2021-2024 due to white snus.

The Snus Commission ignores statistics showing that the use of white snus is particularly common among young people who have not previously been smokers (Public Health Agency of Sweden 2024a; 2025b; Ramstedt, 2025). Marketing of white snus targets new groups, which leads to young people, especially women, getting hooked on nicotine for life. In the 16-29 age group, the proportion of women who use snus daily has increased from 3% in 2018 to 18% in 2024 (Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2024a). The proportion of smokers in this age group has remained constant at around 5%. Thus, it is not the case that snus use is increasing because smoking is decreasing, but rather that recruitment is mainly taking place among those who do not smoke. Among 15-year-old girls, the proportion of snus users increased from 3% in 2019 to 14% in 2024, the vast majority of whom used white snus (CAN report 230, 2024).

In addition, the Snus Commission ignores the negative effects that nicotine itself causes in the form of addiction, withdrawal symptoms, and damage to the mouth (see link to Tobaksfakta). Nicotine, along with heroin, is considered the most addictive substance. The risk of addiction when using nicotine has been reported to be 67.5%, which is significantly higher than alcohol (22.5%), cocaine (20.9%), or cannabis (8.9%) (Lopez-Quintero et al., 2011). Nicotine quickly causes physical dependence by affecting the brain's reward system. Although the first intake of nicotine usually leads to nausea and even vomiting, signs of addiction can appear after just a few weeks of nicotine use (Larsson & Gilljam, 2022). Several studies have found that young people develop nicotine addiction faster than adults. When using e-cigarettes with high doses of nicotine, dependence develops faster than with low doses (Cho, 2025), which makes it likely that this also occurs with the use of white snus. The risk of nicotine dependence is higher in women than in men (Cougles et al., 2016; Perkins & Scott, 2008; Rahmanian et al., 2011).

In addition, white snus is expensive, costing SEK 35-45 per can. One can per day amounts to an annual cost of approximately SEK 12,800-16,400. With more moderate use, half a can per day, the cost is approximately SEK 6,000-8,000 per year. The strong addiction makes it very difficult to quit nicotine use, and many nicotine users will struggle for the rest of their lives to try to reduce their intake or replace it with nicotine patches or nicotine gum, which are also expensive (SEK 12-20 per patch).

Many nicotine users have testified of the enormous difficulties involved in trying to quit nicotine. Snus user Björn Barr, editor at Svenska Dagbladet, has written about his ten-year struggle (250102):

<https://www.svd.se/a/gwvoK5/lyckas-sluta-snusa-efter-20-ar-knepet-som-funkade>

<https://tobaksfakta.se/journalister-berattar-om-kamp-mot-snusberoende/>

His difficult endeavor was also highlighted on P1 morgon 250108 with commentary by addiction expert Markus Heilig, professor of psychiatry:

<https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/sa-klarar-du-nyarsloftet-och-abstinensen>

### **Examples from the Snus Commission**

Here are some examples of statements from the Snus Commission followed by objections that can be made to their insidious arguments (<https://snuskommissionen.se/unga-borjar-snusa-foratt-sluta-roka-cigaretter/>) After the survey they commissioned Demoskop to conduct in 2024, which was reported in May of the same year they concluded:

“The single most common reason why young people (aged 16-34) start using snus is to quit smoking cigarettes. As many as 25 percent of young snus users cited this as the reason for their decision to start using snus. This hardly fits with the image of young people as victims, and is not a cause for concern from a health perspective. Young people quitting smoking is the most important health-promoting measure they can take.”

Our criticism of the result:

- The results of the survey show that 75% of young snus users did not start using snus to quit smoking.
- The sample is skewed from the outset because it only examines those who already use snus – not all young people or young people who have never smoked.
- It is worrying from a health perspective that young people are becoming addicted to nicotine. This means that young nicotine users are being recruited, putting them at risk of lifelong nicotine addiction.
- A report från CAN The Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs described that when young people were asked if they wanted to quit smoking, 32% of boys and 19% of girls answered “no” in 2019. Six years later, in 2025, as many as 53% of boys and 44% of girls answered “no”. As white snus becomes more popular, fewer people want to quit smoking. The proportion of girls who had tried smoking increased during the period, but “ongoing use” decreased slightly. This may be because the increase in white snus has led to greater tolerance for other nicotine products and reduced risk awareness regarding cigarettes.

The survey shows that of those who currently use white snus, 34% would start smoking cigarettes or other similar tobacco products if white snus were not available.

- This is not an argument for marketing white snus. Instead, it shows that at least this proportion has become nicotine-dependent.
- Hypothetical intentions are not proof that smoking would actually increase. Studies of the effect of restricting the use of e-cigarettes, e.g. through flavor restrictions, have not led to a dramatic increase in smoking of tobacco cigarettes among young adults (Friedman et al., 2024).

The Snus Commission also says:

“Total nicotine consumption in society is not increasing. It has remained stable since 2019, i.e. throughout the period when consumption of white snus has skyrocketed. This can only be because other nicotine consumption has decreased to a corresponding degree. This has also happened as we smoke less and less. Those who warn of a dramatic increase in nicotine use in Sweden are therefore speaking against their better judgment, or based on a lack of knowledge”.

- The decline in the total number of smokers is probably due, at least in part, to the death of smokers in the older generation.
- Total nicotine use in Sweden has increased since 2011, when 23% had used a nicotine product in the past 30 days, to 30% in 2024 for the 17-84 age group (CAN report 234).
- This means that young nicotine users are being recruited, putting them at risk of lifelong nicotine addiction.

## More quotes from the Snus Commission

The Snus Commission says “The fact that we smoke so little is hardly due to smoking bans near outdoor restaurants, expensive fines for those who throw cigarette butts on the street, and repulsive images on cigarette packs. Smoking could never have been so low without an alternative”.

Our comment:

- Systematic compilations from the World Health Organization (WHO) show that tobacco control measures such as price increases, advertising bans, and smoke-free environments are effective. Smoking has been declining for a long time, even before white snus was available as an alternative, and even in countries without access to snus, such as Australia (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2025) and Canada (Statistics Canada, 2023). People will always want to use products that are harmful but have enjoyable effects.

The Snus Commission continues:

“In that case, harm reduction is the only successful way to reduce the harm to reasonable levels. In that case, harm reduction is the only successful way to reduce the harm to reasonable levels”

Our comment:

- Harm reduction can of course be good, but it is not the only successful method, and snus/white snus is hardly a harm reduction method that can be recommended from a public health perspective. What helps some may be harmful to many. It is hardly nicotine craving that attracts young people (non-smokers) to try white snus.

In addition to the Snus Commission, companies that manufacture nicotine products have a great responsibility to provide accurate information about the high risk of likely lifelong and difficult-to-treat addiction, especially when marketing is aimed at young people and women in particular.

In addition, several Swedish politicians have actively lobbied for Swedish snus, not least white snus, to be sold in other countries. This is a cynical way of luring young people into what could, in the worst case, be a lifelong addiction.

## Sources:

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Public Health Agency of Sweden (2024b): Young people's use of tobacco and nicotine products [Ungas bruk av tobak och nikotinprodukter](#)

Cost estimate for the use of white snus, Financefinder: How much does a nicotine habit cost? An economic review of white snus [Vad kostar en nikotinvana? En ekonomisk genomgång av vitt snus](#)

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Statistics Canada (2023): Cigarette production, sales, smoking rates trending down [Cigarette production, sales, smoking rates trending down](#)

Dental Care Against Tobacco: About white snus [Om det vita snuset](#)

Tobacco Facts: The nicotine content in white snus can be more than twice as high as in brown snus [Nikotinhalten i vitt snus kan vara mer än dubbelt så hög som i brunt snus](#)

Tobacco Facts: Maximum nicotine limit in snus – a complicated issue [Maxgräns för nikotin i snus – en komplicerad fråga](#)

Tobacco Facts: White snus causes long-term damage to oral health – risks investigated in new study [Vitt snus orsakar långvariga skador på munhälsan – riskerna undersöks i ny studie](#)

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