

***Government of
St. Kitts and Nevis
National Cannabis Commission***

National Prevalence of Use of Cannabis Survey

March – May, 2018

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Statistics in the Ministry of Sustainable Development is the lead agency of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis for the production of official statistics. This function is enshrined within the legal framework of the Department and outlined in the St. Kitts and Nevis Budget Estimates- to make available statistical information for planning and policy making. In addition to the production of official statistics, the Department co-ordinates, co-operates and collaborates other Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to promote the production of quality statistical information for the public good. In line with this function, the Department is pleased to partner with the Ministry of Health and the Marijuana Commission to conduct a study of the prevalence and perception of use of marijuana in St. Kitts and Nevis. The information to be derived from this study is deemed essential to informing the decision-making process of policymakers as to such matters as (i) the prevalence of use of the drug, (ii) the perception of the public to the use of the drug, and (iii) what, if any, changes in laws should be made in regard to the use of and access to this controlled substance.

SURVEY SAMPLE METHOD/METHODOLOGY

The sample method comprised of several steps, but three (3) basic stages. In Stage #1, firstly all parishes on St. Kitts and Nevis were chosen. Secondly, a random sample of communities were selected in each parish. Third, the target sample was chosen basically based on the proportionate size of the community/parish population to the overall population by island (based on the 2011 population census). Fourth, age categories proportioned to the census age groups were created to capture the views of persons of various ages. And finally, an equal number of males and females were targeted to be interviewed. In the scheme outlined, the study sought to interview 2,000 persons, of which 1,460 persons on the island of St. Kitts. This number also comprised of 1,000 males and females each from the various communities/parish, and across both islands (see table 1 below).

In the Stage #2, a systematic random sampling approach is employed. Herein, the interviewer/enumerator selects a random start point- in a selected community- and then proceed to other households using a given interview count e.g. every fifth household. Notably, the enumerator continues this pattern of selection until he or she has completed the assigned number of households in a given community (see Figure#1).

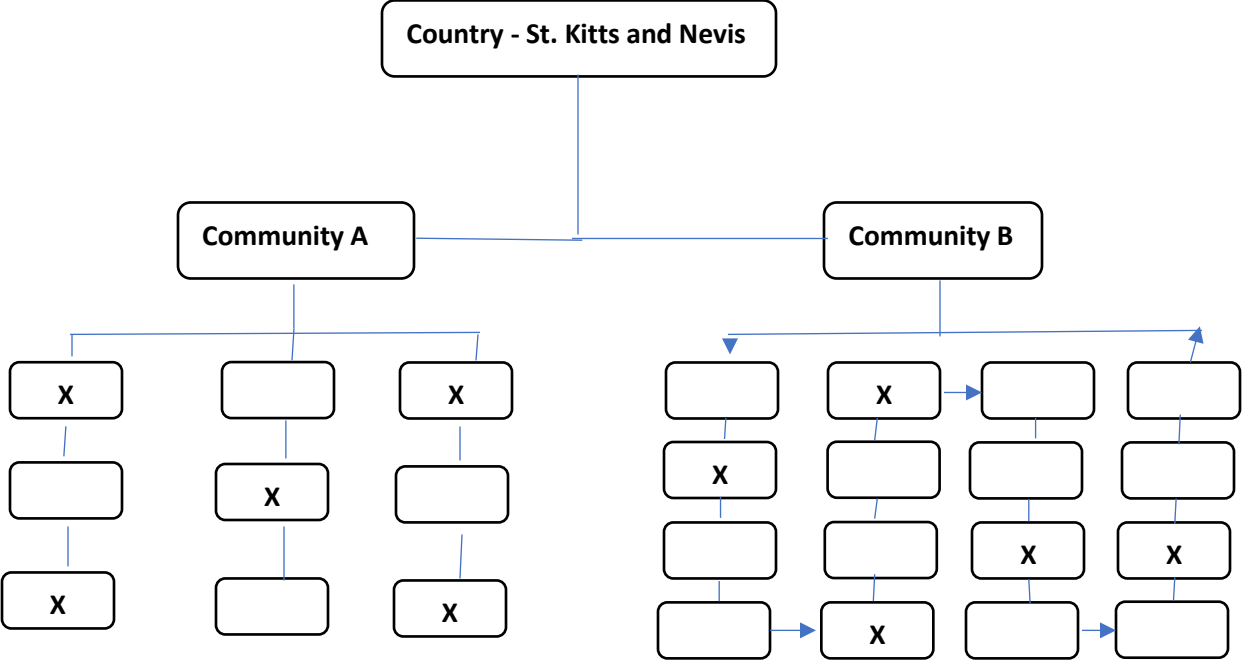
In the final Stage #3, a quota system was adopted. Excluding persons under the age of 18 years old, one person in the randomly selected household was chosen to fill the quota system established by age group and gender. ... Notably, an enumerator should not have interviewed more than one person in given household. And given that persons were eighteen years and older “of the age of responsibility”, there was no requirement for the signing of a “Parental Consent Form”.

Table 1 Summary of the Number of Interviews to be conducted across St. Kitts and Nevis

District	Population (%)	Male	Female	Total
St. Kitts	73%	730	730	1,460
St. George – East & West	27%	270	270	540
St. Peters	11%	110	110	220
St. Anne	5%	50	50	100
St. Paul	4%	40	40	80
Trinity/St. Thomas	4%	40	40	80
Middle Island	5%	50	50	100
St. John	6%	60	60	120
Christ Church	4%	40	40	80
St Mary	7%	70	70	140
St. Paul - Nevis	4%	40	40	80
St. George - Nevis	5%	50	50	100
St. Thomas - Nevis	5%	50	50	100
St. James - Nevis	5%	50	50	100

St. John - Nevis	8%	80	80	160
Total- St. Kitts & Nevis	100%	1,000	1,000	2,000

Figure 1: Graphical Illustration of the two-stage sampling process for the selection of households



SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

The interview questionnaire was developed by the Marijuana Commission during its deliberations. This questionnaire was then reviewed by the Department of Statistics, and feedback was provided- regarding such matters as the clarity of questions asked, and the sequencing of some questions. Later during the training of enumerators and supervisors, discussions prompted some additional minor changes; these were addressed prior to the start of the data collection process.

The survey instrument was made of 34 questions, which addressed such matters as (i) Background information about the respondent, (ii) Use of Marijuana, and (iii) Perception of

Marijuana use. The instrument was designed to collect data from persons using papi (paper assisted personal interview). Now given limited resources and shortness of the questionnaire, it was decided that the interviews would be done on paper, and then the data would be transferred to a statistical database (SPSS and EXCEL) via key-entry by officers of the Government- specially assigned to assist with the project. Thereafter, the database is cleaned, and tables and charts are prepared for the analysis of the data.

DATA COLLECTION

Every survey was administered via face-to-face interviews between a pair of interviewers and the interviewee. As much as possible, surveys were conducted in private- ensuring the confidentiality of the personal information provided, while yet ensure the safety and security of the field workers. In addition to this- given sensitivity of the research topic, the name of respondents was not recorded on the interview questionnaire. However- to assure respondents that their information will be held strictly confidential, enumerators read from a script, which explained the purpose of the study and pledge of anonymity- prior to the start of every interview. Hereto also, the interviewer paired with another field staff, who would have verified that the respondent was properly briefed, and the interview conducted in a professional manner.

The questionnaire comprised of thirty-four questions, with one major skip section, which separated present users of marijuana from those who do not presently use. On average, this questionnaire could be completed within a fifteen to twenty minutes timeframe, and thus the potential issue of interviewee's annoyance and exhaustion was significantly minimized. The data collection was scheduled for the evenings of Monday to Friday, and during the day on Saturdays and Sundays- over a four-week period. Notably, these times were chosen for data collection as to increase the likelihood of finding respondents at home, and at a time when they may be available to participate in this study- with little interruption to their daily routines. In addition to this, advertisements were placed in the media to encourage respondents to co-operate with the undertaking of this study.

Technical Team/Assignments:

The Marijuana Commission, under the leadership of Dr. Hazel Laws, was responsible for the management of this project. The efforts of the Commission were supported by the Department of Statistics- given its wealth of experience in conducting household surveys, and private individuals, who assisted with the conduct of interviews. Moreover, activities were undertaken on both St. Kitts and Nevis to enable the successful implementation of his project.

- ❖ The Marijuana Commission was responsible for the development, general oversight, and final reporting of the project. More specifically, the Commission would have:
 - Develop a work program for the implementation of the project,
 - Collaborate with the Department of Statistics in St. Kitts and Nevis to implement the research study,
 - Supervise the implementation of the field work,
 - Provide general oversight and project management services, and
 - Compile and submit final report.
- ❖ The Director of Statistics shared responsibility for:
 - Select target sample,
 - Recruitment and training of field workers,
 - Supervise directly the activities of the officers in the field,
 - Pilot test and finalize survey instrument- questionnaire, and
 - Develop database for compilation, processing and analysis of data collected.
- ❖ Field Officers: Sixteen (16) enumerators on St. Kitts and ten (10) enumerators on Nevis were selected and trained to conduct the interviews. These persons were chosen based on their educational background, ability to interact well with others, and prior experience in undertaking similar household research interviews. In fact, a major of these private individuals chosen would have worked part-time on household surveys for the Statistics

Department in the past. On the other hand, two (2) supervisors were chosen from within the Statistics Departments on St. Kitts and Nevis.

- ❖ **Pilot Testing:** The review of the questionnaire to determine its effectiveness and reliability followed its initial development by the Commission. Some early feedback was given by the Statistics Department, and later during the training of field workers additional suggestions were put forward. Key areas of review included wording and phrases used, sequencing of questions, and the inclusion of the questions pertinent to research-study objectives.
- ❖ **Field Supervision and Quality Control:** During the conduct on the data collection, the supervision of field activities took place on two levels: (i) general oversight of the Marijuana Commission, and (ii) follow-up with enumerators by designated Officers of the Department of Statistics. Supervisors worked closely with enumerators in the field. Then the Director of Statistics monitored the delivery and completion of questionnaires, and then provided occasionally general status update the Head of the Commission.
- ❖ **Data Processing and Analysis:** These responsibilities were share/split between the Commission and Statistics Department. Whilst the Department played the led role in the data processing and tabulation, the Commission was tasked with the writing of the final report. This is in line with the scope of work, which specified that the Commission would compile and submit a final report.