CANWATCH
Cannabis Surveillance System

Uki Atkinson

National Council on Drug Abuse

Background

- 2015 Decriminalization of marijuana (ganja)
- Concern about impact on risk perception, access & prevalence of use – particularly among adolescents
- Collaborative Effort between Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA), NCDA, Ministry of Health (MOH)
- 3-year project funded by Open Society Foundations
- To be sustained by NCDA following project lifeline

Legal Landscape

- 1948 Dangerous Drugs Act (DDA) addresses all illegal substances in Jamaica.
- Efforts to amend law in Relation to Cannabis (Ganja) spanning 40 years
  - ✓ 1977 Joint Select Committee Letter of Recommendations
  - ✓ 2001 Report of the National Commission on Ganja - national consultations
- Amendments to the DDA
  - ✓ Passed into Law by House of Representatives - February 24, 2015
  - ✓ Took effect with Governor General sign off - April 13, 2015

Decriminalization in a Nutshell

- Decriminalization of the possession of 2oz or less of Ganja – now a ticketable offence

- Use of ganja for medical or therapeutic purposes as recommended or prescribed by a registered/approved medical professional

- Scientific research by a tertiary institution or company, approved by relevant authority

- Use for religious purposes as a sacrament in adherence to the Rastafarian Faith

- Use at events primarily for the purpose of celebrating or in observance of Rastafarian faith

- Home growing (up to 5 plants per household)

- Establishes the CLA as an entity under the industry portfolio

- Establishes the National Council on Drug Abuse as the referral agency for persons under 18yrs found in possession of marijuana and those over 18yrs who appear to be dependent

Local Context – General Population [2016 NHS]

- 28% of Population (12-65) have used ganja at some point (lifetime) up from 19% in 2001
- Current use – 16% up from 2001 – 6%
- Prevalence higher in males – 27% to 5% females
- Average age of first use is 16 for males and 18 for females
- Cannabis Abuse Screening Test (CAST) – 50% of users at high risk for addiction

Local Context – Youth [2013 NSS]

- Lifetime prevalence – 20%
- Current prevalence - 6%
- Average age of first use was 13 years (up from 12 in 2006)
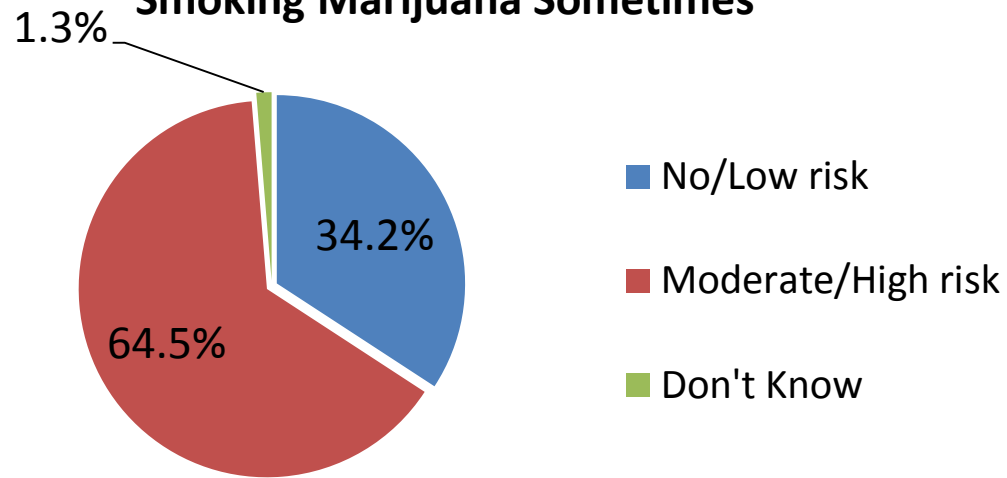- Higher use among males
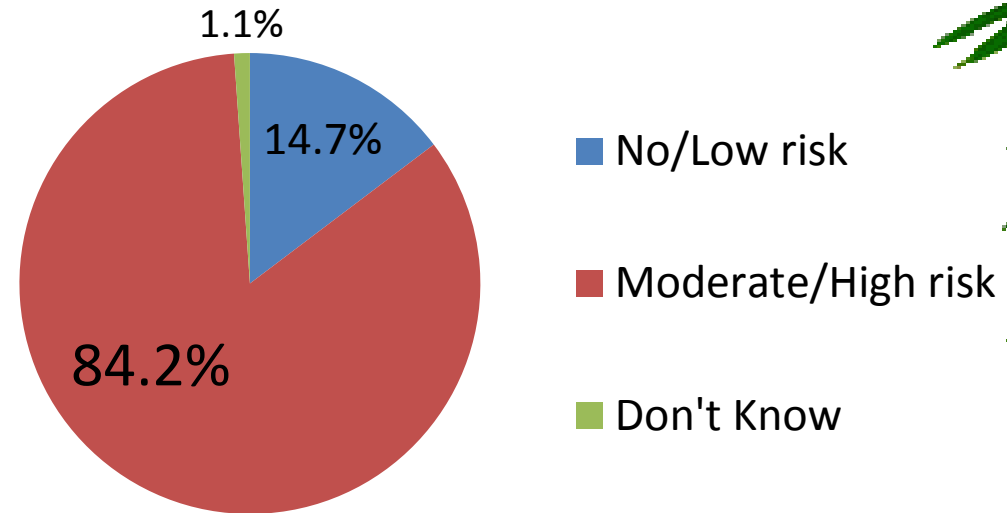- 1 in 5 users at risk for abuse

Local Context - Treatment

- Accounted for 95% of adolescent referrals to NCDA Counselling Network (2015/16)

- 54% increase in referrals to NCDA's Step-up programme (indicated prevention)

- Main drug of impact for clients seeking treatment (2012 – present)
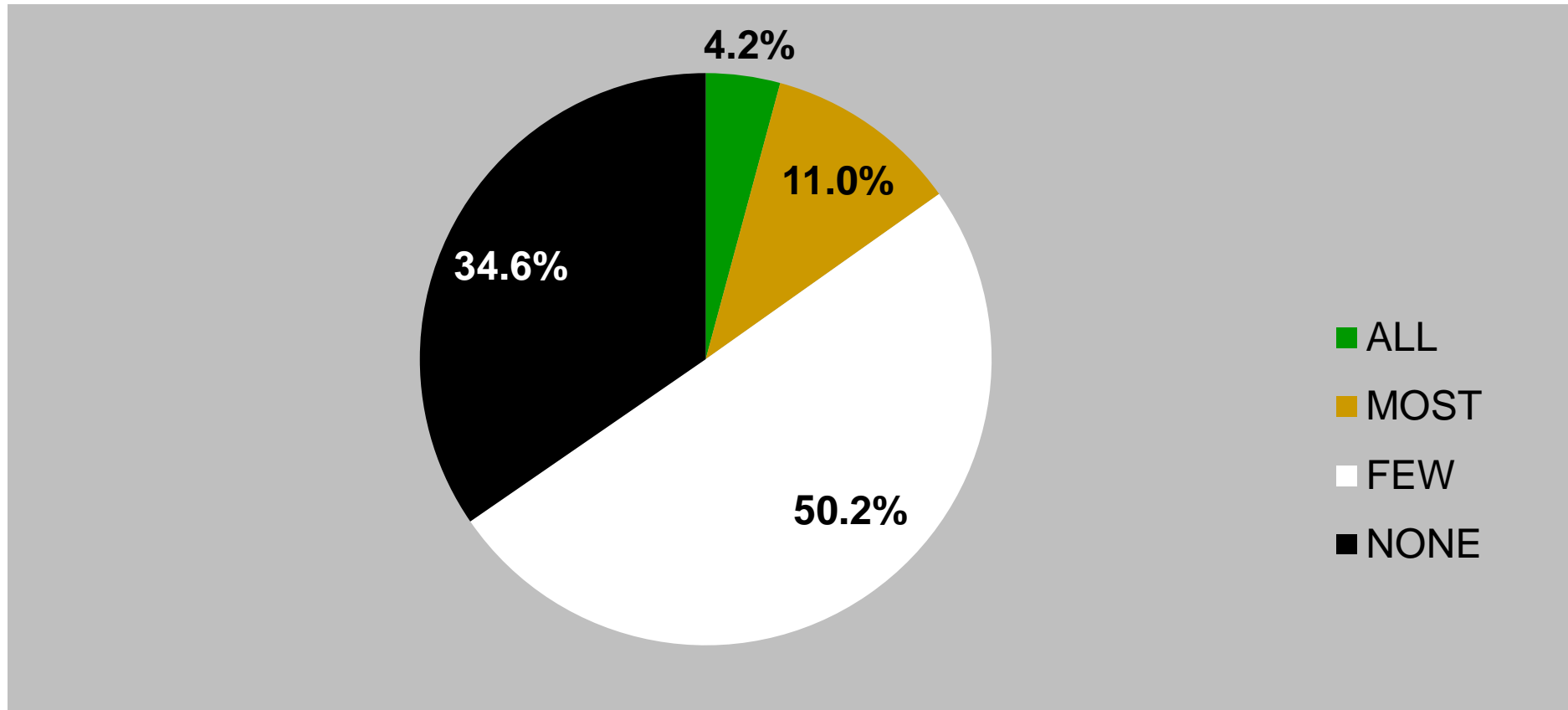
Perception of Risk (General Population)

Smoking Marijuana Sometimes

1.3%

- No/Low risk
- Moderate/High risk
- Don't Know

34.2%

64.5%

Smoking Marijuana Often

1.1%

14.7%

84.2%

- No/Low risk
- Moderate/High risk
- Don't Know

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Awareness of Changes to Dangerous Drugs Act (NHS 2016)

4.2%

11.0%

34.6%

50.2%

- ALL
- MOST
- FEW
- NONE

Level of Agreement with Dangerous Drugs Act (NHS 2016)

Cultivated for Scientific Research — **92.1%**

Medical & Therapeutic Purposes (Tourists) — **74.6%**

Convicted on Court supervised drug treatment prigramme — **71.6%**

Possession of Ltd amts for personal use — **70.0%**

Grown in Ltd amts in HH — **59.6%**

Religious Purposes — **63.8%**

Medical & Therapeutic Purposes — **88.4%**

Legend: ■ Total ■ Males ■ Females

X-axis: 0.0%, 10.0%, 20.0%, 30.0%, 40.0%, 50.0%, 60.0%, 70.0%, 80.0%, 90.0%, 100.0%

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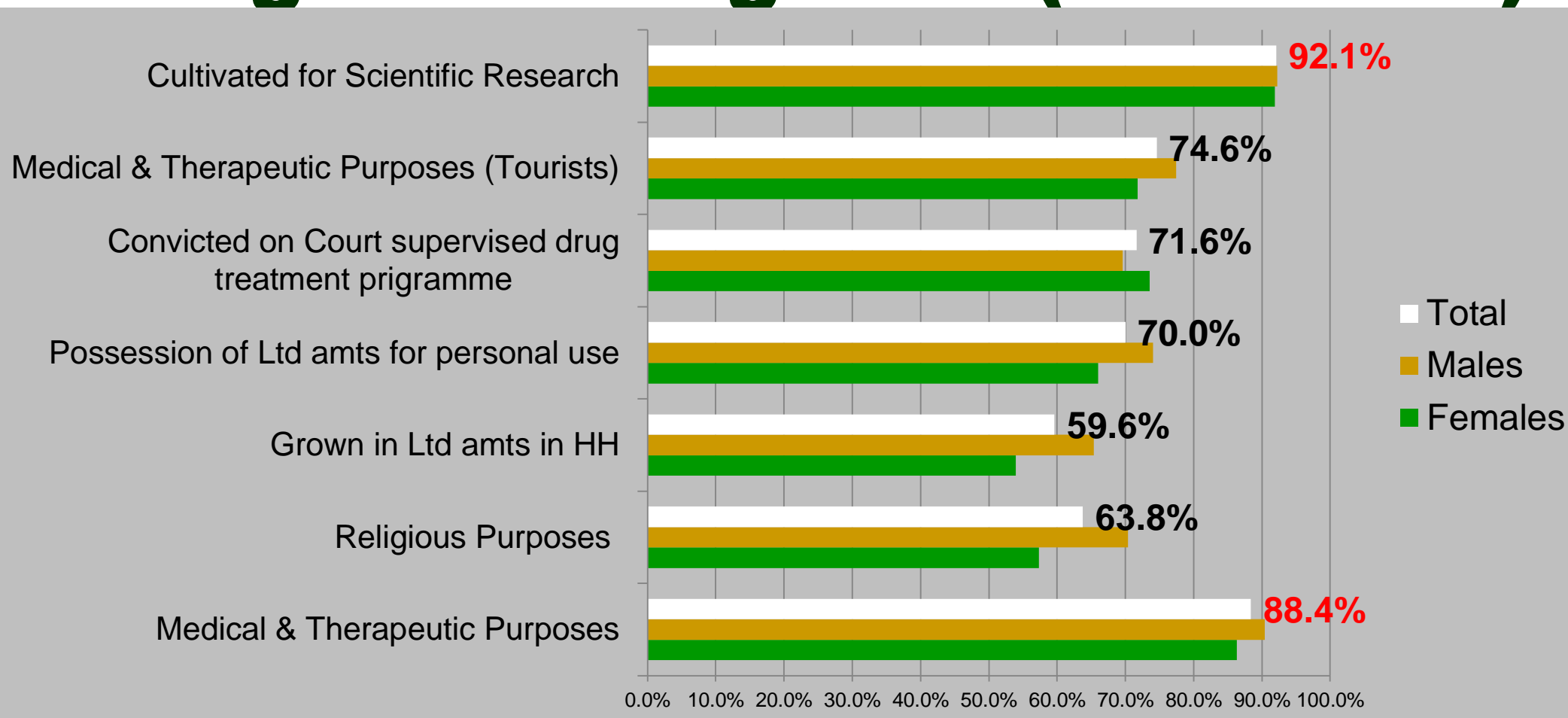
CANWATCH Surveillance Sites

- Drug Abuse Sentinel Surveillance System
  - Ongoing collection, analysis and dissemination of drug use/abuse information on
  - Not limited to marijuana use
- 6 Categories of sentinel sites
  - **NCDA Counselling network (15 sites)**
  - Selected hospitals (12)
  - Drug treatment centers (3)
  - Drug Treatment Court (5)
  - Department of Correctional Services (1)
  - Citizen's Security and Justice Project (CSJP) (6)

Sentinel Surveillance

- Monitor trends
- Identify emerging problems
  - Geographic problem areas
  - High risk populations
- Measure the workload of service providers
- Determine resource needs of sentinel sites
- Inform interventions and assess their outcome

CANWATCH Data

- Reporting site
- Client characteristics
  – Gender
  – Age group
  – Diagnosis by drug
  – Includes co-occurring disorders and specifies cannabis induced psychosis

CANWATCH Tools

- Canwatch Manual
- Drug sentinel surveillance tally sheet
- Weekly drug surveillance sentinel reporting form
- Electronic surveillance system – secure internet-based data processing system accessed by valid system user authentication
  - Data entry at sentinel sites
  - Data administration – review & detection of errors
  - Data Analysis (Download and export to excel created analysis files and structured tables and charts showing YTD trends and computed totals of drug related totals of case visits to reporting sites

Steps to Implementation

Phase 1 completed

- Instrument & database development (consultations)
- Sensitization & training (NCDA staff) – significant shift in approach to data capturing (case counting versus client case management)
- Pilot data capturing and entry
- Retraining

Next Steps

- Sensitize and train other sites
- Start reporting on existing data

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Considerations

- Additional requirement – treatment centers

- Different methodology – taking time to adjust to approach and use of software

- Robust results depend on reporting compliance

Other Responses to Decriminalization

Public education campaign to 'Talk Di Truth' about marijuana use

BY KIMBERLEY HIBBERT
Observer staff reporter
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Thursday, September 14, 2017 🗨 3 Comments

👍 Like 2 Share 🐦 Tweet

(From left) Minister of Health Dr Christopher Tufton; Minister of Justice Delroy Chuck; Tucker; Minister

never before' — Trump

PHOTO: Store on wheels

PM directs NHT to find land in Barbican for low-cost housing

'Bailer man' ends up behind bars

'Too many illegal structures on riverbeds, gully banks and blocking drains'

Gov't wants a performance-based public sector, says PM

No more hurricane, no war!

Assault on cancer

PHOTO: Education talk

Fake accusations

CCTV coming for schools

Today's Horoscope - September 22, 2017

3 teams stay perfect in daCosta Cup

'Fix crime and watch the growth of tourism'

Hope fading for survivors as Mexico search enters third day

Puerto Rico faces misery after Maria 'obliteration'

Hurricane Maria left

Poll

If you could you choose

○ Yes
○ No

Cast Your Vote

You May

Ministers Back NCDA Ganja Education Campaign

By Ainsworth Morris September 14, 2017

🐦 Tweet

Ministries of Government have given their full support to the National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA) 'Talk Di Truth' public-education campaign aimed at engaging youngsters in discussion and information-sharing surrounding marijuana use.

The initiative is targeted at youths aged 13-18, and the objective is to teach them the facts so as to reduce abuse of the substance.

Every high school across Jamaica will have the opportunity to host members of the NCDA to allow for frank discussion on ganja use, including its effects. The NCDA team will also train peer leaders, who will be responsible for imparting information to other students.

The benefits of the programme include receiving and providing current information to school populations about substance abuse; training of school staff in substance use and misuse; assisting with the development of school policies on substance use/misuse; and the provision of school-counselling support for students and student-leader development initiatives.

Photo: Michael Sloley

Minister of Health, Dr the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), interacts with Campion College sixth-form students at the launch of the National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA) 'Talk Di Truth' ganja public-education campaign for students on September 12 at the Terra Nova Hotel in Kingston.

Story Highlights

Ministries of Government have given their full support to the National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA) 'Talk Di Truth' public-education

At the launch held at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel on Tuesday (September 12), Minister of Education, Youth

COMPONENTS

#TalkDiTruth is a multi-pronged approach to public education that will use mass and face to face methods to engage the youth and parent population
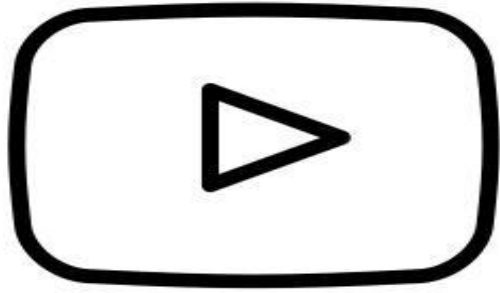
TRADITIONAL MEDIA

SOCIAL MEDIA

IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

MONITORING & EVALUATION