



Measuring Canadians' Awareness of Marijuana's Health Effects May 2018

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to legalize marijuana by summer 2018. Health Canada's [marijuana consumer fact sheet](#) warns Canadians about marijuana's health effects (Health Canada, August 2016). To gauge Canadians' awareness of these effects in advance of legalization, RIWI surveyed over 1100 randomly recruited and engaged Canadians from May 2 to May 12, 2018. [ClearTheAirNow.org](#) commissioned this survey. RIWI collected the data and analyzed it independently.

This brief and the accompanying slides highlight key Health Canada warnings about marijuana's health effects, followed by RIWI findings.

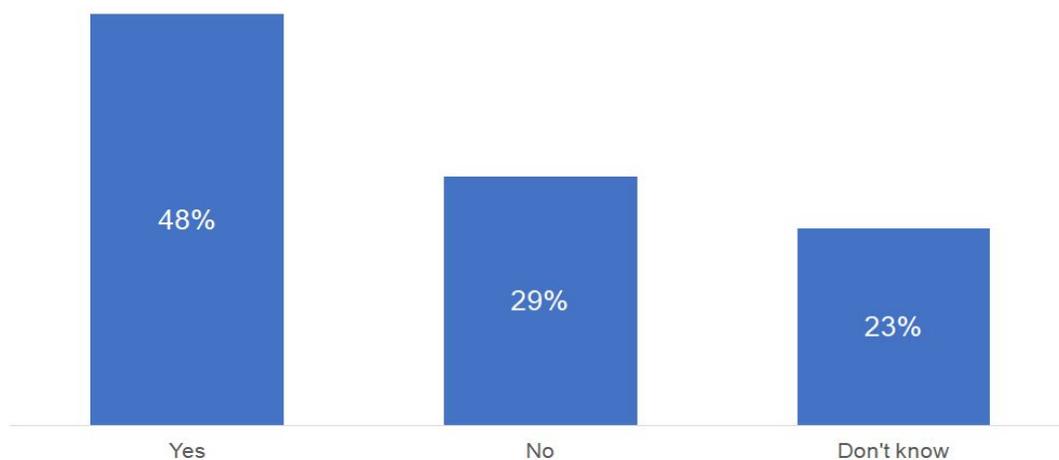
Health Canada statement: "Long term use may result in psychological dependence (addiction)."

RIWI finding: One in three Canadians do not think that marijuana is addictive.

About half of respondents (48%) agreed that marijuana is addictive. The rest either believe it is not (29%) or did not know (22%). Those under age 25 reported similar awareness levels to those 25 and older. However, male respondents are less aware than females. About one in three male respondents (33%) think that marijuana is not addictive, compared with about one in four (26%) of female respondents.

Is Marijuana Addictive?

(Canadians aged 16+, number of observations = 1295)



Source: RIWI Corp. May 12, 2018



Health Canada statement: “Long term use may increase the risk of triggering or aggravating psychiatric and/or mood disorders (schizophrenia, psychosis, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder).”

RIWI finding: One in three Canadians believe marijuana aids mental health.

When asked if taking marijuana impacts mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression, 42% of Canadian respondents believe that marijuana could increase the risk of mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression. However, a majority of respondents (58%) are unaware that marijuana use can increase the risk of anxiety or depression. Of these respondents, roughly two out of three (62%) believe marijuana can aid mental health, and the rest think it does not impact mental illnesses.

Health Canada statement: “Marijuana should not be used if you are pregnant, are planning to get pregnant, or are breastfeeding.”

RIWI finding: One in five women aged 25-34 believe marijuana is safe during pregnancy, while trying to get pregnant, or breastfeeding.

Roughly two out of three (67%) females aged 16-44 agree that smoking marijuana is harmful when pregnant, planning to get pregnant, and breastfeeding. Of those in prime childbearing age (25-34), roughly one in five believe smoking marijuana is safe during pregnancy, planning to get pregnant, and breastfeeding.

While 82% of women aged 16-44 believe that smoking cigarettes is “very harmful” during pregnancy, planning to get pregnant, and breastfeeding, only 67% of women in that age group believe that consuming marijuana is “very harmful” during pregnancy, planning to get pregnant, and breastfeeding.

Health Canada statement: “Marijuana should not be used if you are a man who wishes to start a family.”

RIWI finding: One in two males were unaware that marijuana could harm a man’s fertility.

Roughly half of respondents (51%) agreed that taking marijuana poses health risks to a man's fertility, with the rest saying this was false. Among male respondents (under age 65), slightly fewer (47%) agreed.



Health Canada statement: “Using cannabis can impair your concentration, your ability to make decisions, and your reaction time and coordination. This can affect your motor skills, including your ability to drive.”

RIWI finding: More than 40 percent of those under age 25 are unaware that marijuana impacts safe driving.

Roughly one fifth (21%) of respondents are not aware that marijuana can negatively impact one’s ability to drive safely. (This is more than double those who are not aware that alcohol can negatively impact one’s ability to drive safely.) Those under age 25 are less aware that marijuana affects one’s ability to drive safely, with one-quarter (26%) saying it does not and 15% uncertain.

About RIWI’s Approach: Random and Broad-Based Opinion Monitoring

RIWI’s patented survey technology enables the continuous capture of broad, randomized opinion data on an uninterrupted basis in any geography of the world. RIWI delivers anonymous surveys to random Web users who are surfing online by typing inactive, non-trademarked websites directly into the Web address bar (i.e., URL) and, further, ensures that the exposed survey audiences are representative of the Web-using geography of interest. When these users type in websites that are vacant or no longer exist, RIWI invites these inbound random visitors, filtered through a series of proprietary algorithms, to participate in a language-appropriate survey for no incentives. RIWI’s global survey platform thus enables rapid and non-conditioned survey response data from any random respondent encounter.

No personally identifiable information is collected, stored or transferred. RIWI technology offers a “truly random sample of the Internet population”, according to IRIS (International Research Institutes), the largest scientific association of independent research agencies in the world, when describing RIWI’s technology solutions.

Since its incorporation in 2009, RIWI has received more than 1.2 billion responses across the world responding to RIWI surveys, digital campaigns and ad tests.

From May 2 - May 12, 2018, RIWI continuously gathered sentiment and trends data from more than 1,100 respondents aged 16 and over in Canada. RIWI simultaneously gathered data on the same questions for 1,000 US respondents during this time period. The number of observations per question vary due to the randomization of the survey engagement process. Some respondents choose not to respond to every survey question since RIWI technology does not use quota-based sampling or other methods to compel disinterested or paid respondents from answering all questions. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.



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