



The *new* face of Big Tobacco

Say NO to Big Marijuana in New Zealand

Same corporates.
Same objectives.
Same addiction.
New product.



URUGUAY

As early as 1974, Uruguay **decriminalised** possession. And then in 2013, Uruguay became the first country to fully **legalise** the marijuana market, operating under state control.



In an attempt to reassure the international public opinion, President José Mujica said that his government would not allow unlimited use of marijuana and illicit drug dealing, and promised to launch at the same time *"a campaign aimed at young people on how to consume marijuana. Avoid, for example, to smoke to not damage the lungs but inhale or consume it with food"*.

And because of public opposition, the Open Society Foundation headed by the financier **George Soros** announced the launch of a massive media campaign across the nation to manipulate the public consensus. *Time Magazine* (5 Aug 2013) reported that *"a massive media campaign, with television ads funded partly by Soros' Open Society Foundations group, were required to convince opponents of legalisation"*.

PUBLIC DISAPPROVAL

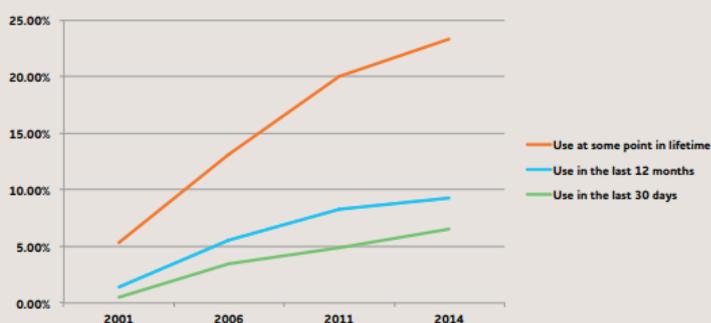
Public opinion surveys have consistently shown most Uruguayans to be doubtful about the government's initiative. According to a 2014 survey, **only 34% of Uruguayans approved the new regulations** regarding the liberalisation of marijuana use, while **60.7% disapproved**. Approval for legalisation was closely related to previous personal experimentation with marijuana and a history of marijuana consumption among relatives and close friends.

STATE CONTROL – HOW IT WORKS

There are three ways to legally obtain cannabis in Uruguay. The **first** alternative is *autocultivo*, which allows individuals to grow up to six marijuana plants per household and yield an annual crop of 480 grams per year, or 40 grams per month. All individuals must register with the government agency for the regulation and control of cannabis—called the *Instituto de Regulación y Control de Cannabis* (Cannabis Regulation and Control Institute) to grow these plants in their home and no person may register more than one location for domestic growth. The **second** alternative is the Cannabis Club, which allows between 15 to 45 members of a duly-registered civil association to farm up to 99 marijuana plants in specific locations. Each club may not supply any individual with more than 480 grams of marijuana per year. The **third** alternative is sale through pharmacies. This alternative will allow a registered consumer to buy up to 40 grams of marijuana per month and 480 per year in person from pharmacies that are registered with the IRCCA and the Ministry of Public Health. On July 19, 2017, Uruguay launched the last remaining stage of the cannabis law, with sales finally beginning in 16 pharmacies across the country.

FIGURE 5.2

CHANGE IN CANNABIS USE IN URUGUAY



Source: <http://ow.ly/KREM3044km7>

PUBLIC SKEPTICISM

Most Uruguayans remained skeptical about the benefits the new regulation would bring. Only 19% believed that the situation would improve, and 42% said it would worsen. 72% said that growing marijuana is harmful to health, 72% saw marijuana as a gateway drug, and almost half saw marijuana users as a threat to society.



PUBLIC USAGE

In **2001, 5.3%** of the population admitted to having consumed marijuana. By **2014**, life prevalence had **quadrupled with 22.1%** of Uruguayans acknowledging some consumption.

TEENS - Prevalence **doubled** among secondary school students from 2003 to 2014. In **2003, 8.4%** of students had consumed marijuana during the previous twelve months. In **2014, 17%** had. Almost a quarter of the high-frequency users of Montevideo had their first experience with marijuana before turning the age of 15 (24.1%).

Prevalence is also higher among 19-24 year-olds than other age categories.

NON-COMPLIANCE

As at February 2018, approx. 30,000 of the 140,000 past-month cannabis users estimated in Uruguay in 2014 had registered. A recent survey found that almost 40% said they would probably or definitely **flout the law** which requires registration.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Ministerio de Salud Pública were required to submit an annual report on the impacts of the legalisation since 2014 - but the Ministry has only submitted such a report **once** – in 2016 – and the findings were **not made public**.

PRODUCTS

A recent study of marijuana consumers in Montevideo found that users had consumed it in several different ways during the past year, including vaporizers (15.7%), edibles such as brownies, cakes, cookies (26.4%), and drinks such as mate, milkshakes, daiquiris (9.4%).

PERCEPTION OF RISK

The study of marijuana consumers in Montevideo also found that users had a very low perception of risk associated with undertaking several activities while under the influence of marijuana. For instance: 21.4% of respondents **drove a car under the influence of marijuana**; 28.4% **rode a motorcycle**; 11.2% **operated heavy equipment**. More than half of the respondents (55.4%) declared that they consumed marijuana and **went to work** before four hours had passed. More than one in every four of those women who were pregnant (26.1%) reported to having continued **consuming marijuana while pregnant**.

BLACK MARKET

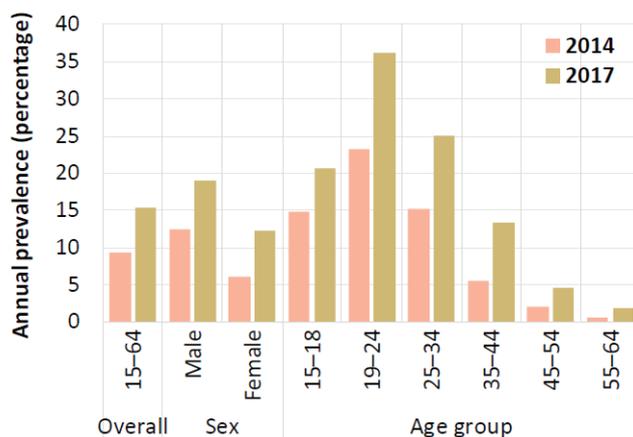
Three years after legalisation, **seven out of every ten cannabis consumers still acquire the product on the black market**. Authorities admit that *“street selling points have multiplied in recent years, along with criminal acts related to micro trafficking.”* Others have pointed to the very low concentration of THC in the legal drug as another reason why some users may turn to the black market.

SUMMARY

What we have learned from the data so far indicates that frequency of consumption has significantly increased, especially in the 15-24 age group. The perception of risk with drug use is low, and risky behaviours have increased with the frequency of consumption, including use of marijuana during pregnancy. The black market is alive and well. And the overwhelming support for the regulation among high-frequency marijuana users does not immediately translate into willingness to comply with it. Of most concern is that monitoring and reporting of the effects of legalisation is minimal, and not made public.

The drug-friendly website *CannabisWire* in July 2018 summed it up perfectly. *“What Have We Learned From the First Nation to Legalize Cannabis? Not Enough.”*

FIG. 28 Cannabis use in Uruguay, by sex and age group, 2014 and 2017



Source: Monitor Cannabis Uruguay, 2018.



For additional information, including source references:
SayNopeToDope.org.nz/uruguay

Correct as at time of printing. We welcome any documented corrections.