

Using municipal wastewater to measure Canadians' consumption of cannabis and opioids

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Over the last few months, Statistics Canada has been updating the national statistical system to measure the production, consumption and distribution of non-medical cannabis. To date, this work has involved updating classification standards (such as the North American Product Classification), developing models that take existing information (mainly from health and social surveys) and transforming it into estimates of consumption and expenditure, as well as undertaking new surveys on cannabis consumption and use.

Moving forward, Statistics Canada will need to develop data collection instruments and infrastructure to acquire the information that the agency requires to measure the economic and social implications of the legalization of cannabis. Given the difficulty in obtaining this information and the level of detail required by data users, Statistics Canada is using non-traditional methods to acquire as much information as possible. One such method is the use of wastewater analysis to measure drug consumption levels in the general population.

The use of wastewater to measure drug use is not new, having been performed in various countries for over ten years. This note provides an overview of a pilot project being conducted by Statistics Canada to measure the concentration of tetrahydrocannabinol and other chemicals in municipal wastewater to estimate drug consumption of the population serviced by the wastewater systems.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers 1901 and 5263.

The document "[Using municipal wastewater to measure Canadians' consumption of cannabis and opioids](#)," which is part of *Latest Developments in the Canadian Economic Accounts* ([13-605-X](#)), is now available.

The product *Cannabis Stats Hub* ([13-610-X](#)) is available.

The *User Guide: Canadian System of Macroeconomic Accounts* ([13-606-G](#)) is also available.

The *Methodological Guide: Canadian System of Macroeconomic Accounts* ([13-607-X](#)) is also available.

The *System of Macroeconomic Accounts* module is accessible and features an up-to-date portrait of national and provincial economies and their structure.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).