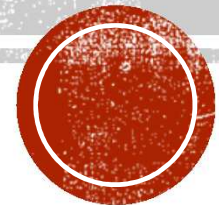


# THE FIRST GPS IN MONTENEGRO

Methodological aspects and challenges



Tatijana Đurišić, Public Health Institute of Montenegro

# Background

- Available data on substance use among young – ESPAD 2008, 2011 and 2015
- Lack of data on substance use in the general population
  - Pilot GPS survey in 2014
  - Supported by EMCDDA, implemented by PHI
    - To gain experience and learn lessons prior to implementation of the full national survey
    - To test the European Model Questionnaire and complement it with the additional nationally relevant questions
    - To develop other survey instruments
    - To determine the most appropriate survey design and methodology of data collection in order to achieve high response rates and reliable data
    - To estimate the frame error of the sample and needed sample size for the full GPS survey



# Objectives

- To estimate **prevalence and patterns of use** of substances in the general population and in the relevant subgroups of population (young adults 15 -34, youngsters 15 - 24 ):
  - Tobacco
  - Alcohol
  - Pharmaceuticals
  - Inhalants
  - Anabolic steroids
  - Cannabis (skunk, marijuana, hashish)
  - Ecstasy
  - Amphetamines
  - Heroin
  - Cocaine
  - LSD
  - NPS



# Objectives, cont.

- To estimate **prevalence and patterns of gambling and playing games of chance** in the general population and in the relevant subgroups of population (young adults 15 -34, youngsters 15 - 24 )
- To estimate **prevalence and patterns of online gaming** in the general population and in the relevant subgroups of population (young adults 15 -34, youngsters 15 - 24 )
- To estimate **prevalence and patterns of use of internet** in the general population and in the relevant subgroups of population (young adults 15 -34, youngsters 15 - 24 )
- To explore **attitudes** towards drug use and drug users
- To explore **perception of risks** from using various psychoactive substances
- To explore **perception of availability** of psychoactive substances
- To gain insight into the socio-demographic characteristics and patterns of drug use among lifetime and recent users of various substances, including age at the first use, frequency of use, source of the substance used, etc.



# Context

- Introduced **as *Survey on life quality, lifestyles and health risks of inhabitants of Montenegro***
- **69 country specific items** exploring the following subjects:
  - general satisfaction with life and health
  - additional items on the use of tobacco
  - additional items on the use of alcohol
  - use of inhalants (volatile solvents)
  - use of anabolic steroids
  - frequency and patterns of playing games of chance/gambling
  - frequency and patterns of use of internet
  - perception and satisfaction with the community



# Context, cont.

- Designed as a single cross-sectional study
- Introduced ***as a survey on life quality, lifestyles and health risks of inhabitants of Montenegro***
- Representative of the national level
- To meet the objectives of the study, a target of minimum of 4000 completed interviews was set, net sample of **4027** questionnaires attained
- Standard instrument - *European Model Questionnaire*, supplemented with the optional EMCDDA module on NPS and on the availability of drugs, section of the alcohol module from the RARHA instrument, and a subsets of national items



# Sampling

- Multi-stage sampling
- Census of population in 2011 - the settlements were subdivided into small operational segments called enumeration areas (EAs) - 3,651 EAs used as the primary sampling units
- Selected sample size 5620 households, 4027 participated
- Overrepresentation of 15-34 year olds
- Frame errors - 452 households or 8% of total (gross) sample
- Non-respondents - 1141 households: 20.3%
- Refusals - 395 households - 7% of the total sample
- The most common reason of non-response is refusal at the door which accounts for almost 90% of refusals



# Principles and organisation of data collection

- Exclusively through face-to-face interviews in **households**
- **List of Households with the household holder name and address**
- Selection of respondent in the household - method of the **last birthday**
- Interviewing in the household found at the given address
- Three attempts of interviewing required, after the third attempt interviewer goes to the next household from the List of Households
- **33 interviewers** engaged from the Statistical Office of Montenegro – MONSTAT
- Trained during one – day sessions at the Public Health Institute of Montenegro
- 8 supervisors to monitor and control the work of interviewers





# Supervision

- 4 supervisors from MONSTAT controlled fieldwork procedures
- 4 supervisors from the Public Health Institute controlled methodological aspects and issues related to the questionnaire and its administration
- Daily follow up and communication with interviewers
- Upon completion of work at one location (enumeration area), interviewers delivered a report to their supervisor on daily work
- Where oversights in filling the field documents were identified, immediate corrections demanded
- Monitoring all aspects of interviewing – kindness of interviewers, reaction of respondents to the interview and interviewer, respecting the confidentiality and survey procedures, etc.
- Supervision of interviewers included phone calls to respondents and visits to households (about 2% of households)



# Survey instruments: the Questionnaire

- All core questions from the EMQ
- Voluntary modules on the new psychoactive substances and on the availability of drugs
- 2 questions from the draft new alcohol GPS module
- additional 69 national items, which explore the following subjects:
  - general satisfaction with life and health
  - additional items on the use of tobacco
  - additional items on the use of alcohol
  - use of inhalants (volatile solvents)
  - use of anabolic steroids
  - frequency and patterns of playing games of chance/gambling
  - frequency and patterns of use of internet

**132 items in total**



# Survey instruments: Show-cards

Questions	Show card	Subject
15 and 16	1	Alcohol - definition of "a drink"
22 to 28	2	Pharmaceuticals – images and colloquial names
29 to 103	3	Drugs – street and jargon names
107 to 112	4	Attitudes and opinions – categories of answers
126 to 129	5	Characteristics of respondents – categories of answers

# Survey instruments: Contact Sheets

- Three attempts to contact each sampled household made, at different days and times of the day
- To record each attempt of contact, interviewers used a special form - Contact Sheet:
  - (I) general information about households – filled upon the first arrival of the interviewer at the address
  - (II) specific information on all attempts to conduct the interview, characteristics of respondents, non-respondents, reasons of non-participation, reasons of refusal, etc.



# Challenges (1)

## Challenges related to the survey design and methodology

- Findings reliant on self-reporting measures, which typically bears limitations
- Honesty management in this type of the survey is less possible to control
- Possible interview bias - tendency of the interviewer to subconsciously obtain answers that support preconceived notions, might have influenced the results
- Some of the problems of self-reporting were countered through the careful design and application of self-reporting measures, as well as through statistical techniques devised to attempt to pick out dishonest reporting
- Some of the weaknesses attenuated by ensuring respondents of confidentiality of responses, both through the careful oral introduction of the interviewers and in a formal written form
- Complete anonymity was impracticable, as interviewers visit respondents **in their household**
- Asking people if they had been were involved in an illegal activity in their household – WHY would they be honest?



# Challenges (2)

## Challenges related to fieldwork

- Time of the year – severe weather conditions in the beginning
- Some interviewers needed more time to get familiar with the terminology of the questionnaire
- Higher rate of rejections in areas where inhabitants are often sampled in surveys, hence reluctant to interviewing
- Interviewing at „infamous“ locations extremely hard to reach - strict entrance control and security measures
- Longer absence of inhabitants from their households during winter (seasonal migrations)
- Permanent migration trend in the northern municipalities



# Challenges (3)

## ... Challenges related to fieldwork

- Respondents absent at the arranged time
- Last birthday method – lower response rates (should have been more flexible to allow selection of the person who last had a birthday among those **present in the household at the moment of visit**)
- Some respondents revolted by the subject of the survey, some felt uncomfortable
- Interviewing older respondents and respondents with lower education, especially in rural areas, who have never heard of some of the substances and had trouble understanding drug-related terminology
- Demotivated interviewers, because they had to put in a lot of effort, many times fruitlessly
- **Short timeline**



# Lessons learned (1)

- **At least twice as much** time as it was available in this GPS must be planned for the next GPS, for all phases of the survey
- There is a need for updating Lists of Households. New census of population in 2021 will solve this significantly
- Close and intensive supervision and control of the fieldwork is essential for the quality of fieldwork
- When mistakes or oversights are identified, immediate corrections must be demanded from the interviewers
- Interviewers must be well trained and well motivated for participation in the survey





## Lessons learned (2)

- The best time for the fieldwork is spring or autumn, in order to increase efficacy of the fieldwork and avoid potential bias caused by absence of respondents
- EMQ is an adequate tool for surveying use of substances in the general population, but designed as a wider-range instrument on the quality of life, lifestyles and health risks
- Still, in the next GPS it is advisable to consider including *a fewer number of optional modules and questions*
- Inclusion of questions about the new psychoactive substances should be reconsidered once more as these questions are time-consuming but did not prove relevant
- Additional measures to increase honesty of answers must be considered



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION**

