



# USE OF MEDICAL CANNABIS IN NURSING HOMES IN PENNSYLVANIA

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## INTRODUCTION

Increased research efforts have focused on the health benefits and risks of medical marijuana following its legalization in Pennsylvania in 2016. However, limited research exists regarding its use, barriers to use and public opinion .

This study aims to identify policies and institutional barriers governing the use of medical marijuana by persons residing in nursing homes in Pennsylvania (PA).

## METHOD

700 nursing facilities in PA were contacted via telephone to request the email address(es) of the Nursing Home Administrator (NHA) or Director of Nursing (DoN) to send an anonymous survey via REDCap (link to survey:

<https://redcap.pcom.edu/surveys/?s=T34M4LPJXE>). The survey strives to

determine whether PA nursing homes have existing policies for the use

of medical marijuana by residents. It also provides context as to why or why not

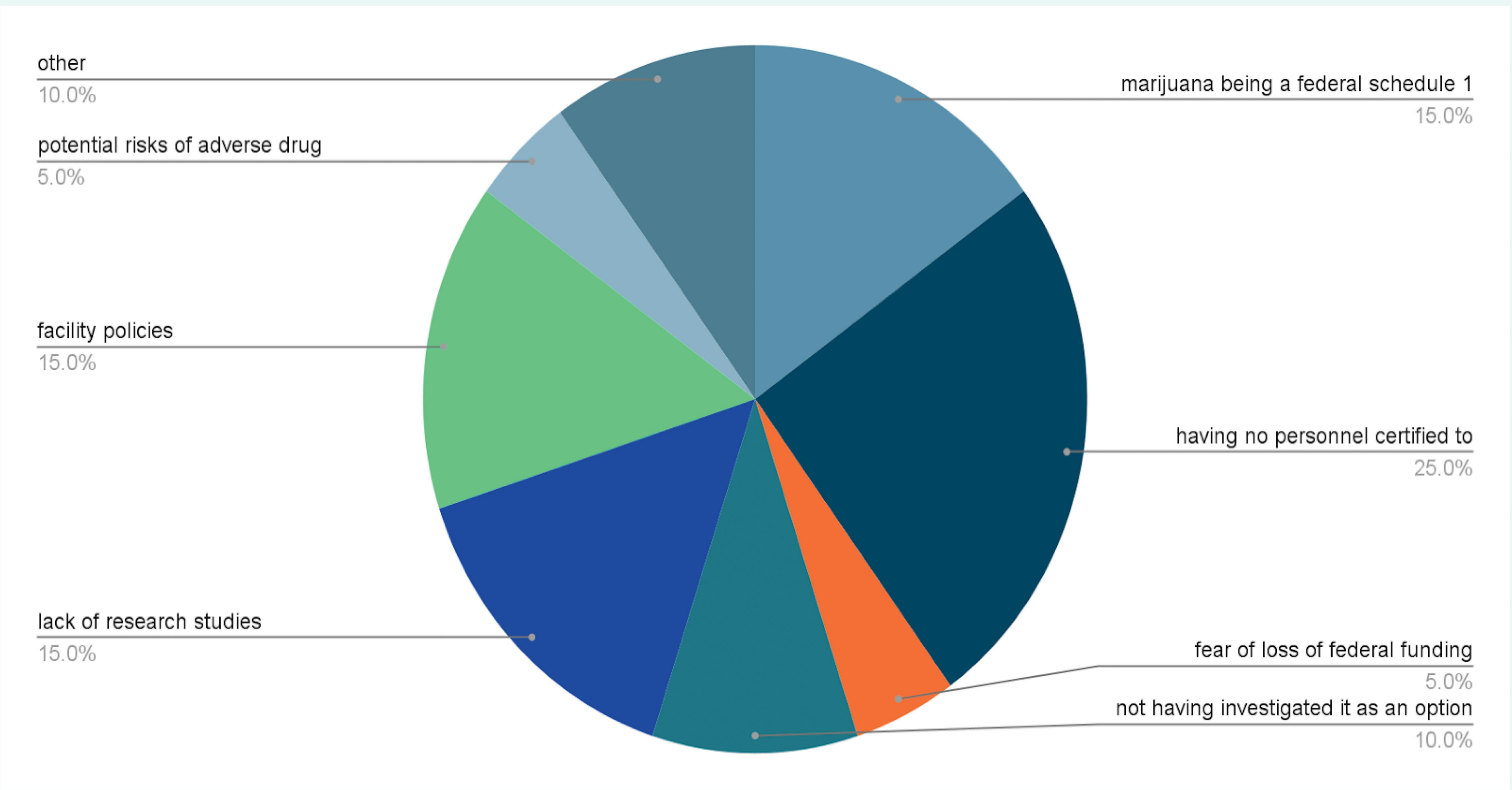
such policies have been developed. Survey completers have the option of

entering to win a \$100 Amazon gift card.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Data collection remains ongoing. Initial survey responses indicated that 75% of facilities did not have policies for residents' use of medical marijuana. However, subsequent data (after quadrupling the number of responses) show that closer to 60% lack medical marijuana policies. The reasoning behind lack of policy included the following: 1) marijuana remains a federal Schedule I drug; 2) lack of certified personnel to recommend its usage; 3) fear of loss of federal funding; 4) not having investigated it as an option. Other concerns are: 5) lack of research studies; 6) facility policies; 7) potential risk of adverse drug reactions; and 8) other.

## Representation of the limiting factors to creation of a policy regarding use of medical marijuana in nursing homes



## CONCLUSION

The factor most frequently cited as a barrier to creation of a policy for use of medical marijuana by persons residing in PA nursing homes is lack of staff who are certified recommenders, ie., to provide DOH certification for residents.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stephenie Canlas, NHA was instrumental in the development of the survey, and Ilene Warner-Maron, PhD provided input and feedback on survey materials.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Madeleine Brown, OMS-3 and Joy Dhanawade, OMS-I who assisted in the data collection process.

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