

Preliminary

# THE BAHAMAS STEPS Survey 2019

The STEPS survey of noncommunicable disease (NCD) risk factors in The Bahamas was carried out from January 2019 to April 2019. The Bahamas carried out Step 1, Step 2 and Step 3. Socio demographic and behavioural information was collected in Step 1. Physical measurements such as height, weight and blood pressure were collected in Step 2. Biochemical measurements were collected to assess blood glucose, cholesterol and urinary salt levels in Step 3. The survey was a population-based survey of adults aged 18-69. A stratified multi-stage cluster sample design was used to produce representative data for that age range in The Bahamas. The total sample size was 3,840 adults. The overall response rate was 61.6%. The next iteration of STEPS is expected in 2024.

## TOBACCO USE



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 16.7 % respondents were current smokers
- More men smoked than women (men 26.9% vs. women 6.4%)
- Smokers had their first smoke at age 19 years
- 7.7% Secondhand smoke exposure in homes
- 11.3% Secondhand smoke exposure in workplaces

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **17.4%** Bahamians are current smokers [men 32.4% vs. women 3.6%]
- **7.7%** of current smokers smoke daily, at least 10 cigarettes each day
- **10 times** more men smoke than women
- **82.6%** Bahamians have either never smoked or have quit smoking
- Cigarettes are preferred among younger Bahamians age 18 – 44 years, while cigars are the preference of those 45 years and over
- **44.6%** current smokers have tried to quit within the last year
- **12.1%** Secondhand smoke exposure in homes [men 15.5% vs. women 8.9%]
- **17.4%** Secondhand smoke exposure in work places [men 25.7% vs. women 10.2%]
- **1.5%** use e-cigarettes

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- Current tobacco use prevalence 17.6% AMR [PAHO Core Health Indicators, 2018]

## ALCOHOL USE



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 34.4% respondents were lifetime abstainers
- 40.8% respondents were current drinkers
- The percentage of men who engaged in HED<sup>1</sup> was almost double that of females [men 21.2% vs. women 12.2%]

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **29.3%** of Bahamians are lifetime abstainers
- **49.6%** of Bahamians are current drinkers
- **17.6%** HED prevalence
- **42.6%** of Bahamians drink an average of 4 drinks in a single occasion
- Though Bahamian men engage twice as much in HED than do their counterparts, high and intermediate level drinkers tend to be Bahamian women between the ages of 18 to 44 years
- **14.2%** of Bahamians could not stop drinking once they started, this is mostly the case for older men ages 45 to 69 years; and younger females ages 18 – 44 years
- **6%** current drinkers on a monthly or more frequent basis failed to do expected tasks because of their drinking

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- 13.2% HED prevalence [Region of the Americas, 2013]



Ministry of Health

<sup>1</sup>HED, heavy episodic drinking

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## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 72.6% respondents did no vigorous physical activity
- 31.2% respondents did high levels of activity

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- On average, men spend double the amount of time (291 minutes) each day engaging in some type of physical activity compared to women (149.2 minutes). The national average is 216.8 minutes.
- **77 minutes**, median for daily physical activity [men 180 minutes vs. women 40 minutes]
- **30.2%** of Bahamians do not get sufficient physical activity [men 20% versus women 39.5%]
- **57.9%** of Bahamians do not participate in vigorous physical activity [men 40.4% vs. women 73.9%]
- **23.7%** (or 4 hours) of our waking hours each day are spent doing sedentary activities. Bahamians get on average of 7.1 hours of sleep each day
- Men ages 45 to 69 years spent more time in some form of physical activity than younger men. The opposite was observed with women, younger women ages 18 to 44 years spent more time being physically active than older women.

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- Insufficient physical activity prevalence, 38.9% AMR [PAHO Core Health Indicators, 2018]; 27.5%, globally [GHO<sup>2</sup> data, 2016]

## BODY MASS INDEX



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 30.5 average BMI
- 30.4% respondents had BMI 25 to 29, and classified as overweight
- 49.2% respondents had BMI  $\geq 30$ , and classified as obese

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **29.8** average BMI
- **4.6%** of Bahamians with BMI  $< 18.5$ , under weight [men 6.7% vs women 2.7%]
- **23.8%** of Bahamians have normal body weight
- **27.9%** with Bahamians BMI 25 – 29 [men 35.2% vs. women 25.8%]
- **43.7%** with Bahamians BMI  $\geq 30$ , obese [men 31.8% vs. women 54.8%]
- **0.90 WHR<sup>3</sup>**, both sexes

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- Overweight and obesity prevalence, 62.4% AMR [PAHO Core Health Indicators, 2018]

## FRUIT & VEGETABLE



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 90% respondents ate less than 5 servings per day
- 22% ate no fruits and/or vegetables

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **One-quarter** (23.2%) eat no fruits or vegetables
- **4 in 5** (85.3%) Bahamians eat less than 5 servings per day
- **14.7%** eat  $\geq 5$  servings per day
- **3.6 of 7** days fruits are eaten, but no more than 1 serving each day
- **4.3 of 7** days vegetables are eaten, but no more than 1.5 servings each day

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- WHO recommendation is 5 or more servings of fruits and/or vegetables each day

<sup>2</sup>GHO = Global Health Observatory, the World Health Organization

<sup>3</sup>WHR = Waist to hip ratio. A risk factor cardiovascular heart disease.

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## DIETARY HABITS

### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 66.3% respondents used vegetable oil for cooking
- 3.2% ate on average 3 meals per week that were cooked outside the home [men 4 meals vs. women 3 meals]



### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **5 of 7** days breakfast is eaten
- **40.9%** adults eat 3 meals each day
- **45.4%** of Bahamians drink the recommended 8 or more glasses of water each day
- **16.6%** always read nutrition labels when grocery shopping
- **42.7%** never or rarely read nutrition labels when grocery shopping
- **68.8%** of Bahamians report that salt and/or sugar content in a product influences their decision to purchase

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- WHO recommends 4mg of salt (2mg of sodium) maximum each day

## SUGAR INTAKE

### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- Not explored



### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **20%** Bahamians add no sugar to their hot beverages like tea and coffee
- **34.1%** add 2 spoons of sugar
- **26%** add 3 or more spoons of sugar
- **32%** eat 'sweets' everyday or at least 3 days each week
- **30.7%** drink sugary drinks everyday of the week
- **28.5%** drink sugary drinks 2 to 3 days every week
- **1 to 3** cans of a sugary drinks are consumed by the vast majority (92%) of Bahamians each day

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

## DIABETES

### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 10.7% respondents tested were pre-diabetics
- 23.9% respondents had high blood glucose levels (diabetes)



### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **22.8%** adult Bahamians never had their blood sugar level tested
- **6.8%** pre-diabetes prevalence
- **11.6%** diabetes prevalence
- **55.3%** medication<sup>4</sup> non-compliance prevalence [men 37.4% vs. women 50.9%]
- **18%** previously diagnosed diabetics on insulin
- **17.7%** previously diagnosed diabetics taking herbal/traditional remedies [men 23.6% vs. women 12.7%]
- Among diabetic Bahamians, 32.7% had an eye exam, 23.9% had a foot exam as part of their diabetic management in the last year

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- Diabetes prevalence, 8.5% AMR [PAHO Core Health Indicators, 2018]

<sup>4</sup>Medicine prescribed by a doctor/healthcare worker

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## SALT INTAKE



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- Not explored

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **70%** men and 63.3% women believe they consume just the right amount of salt
- **24.8%** of Bahamians admit to eating too much salt
- **64.9%** of Bahamians add salt or salty seasoning/sauce often or always when cooking
- **16.4%** add salt or salty sauce when eating food
- **25.7%** of Bahamians eat processed foods high in salt often or always
- **94.3%** of Bahamians believe too much salt can cause health problems
- **33.6%** of Bahamians read salt content information on food labels
- **10.5** grams, average dietary salt consumed by each Bahamian each day. Bahamians consume double the amount of recommended salt<sup>5</sup> everyday

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- 88.3% of the world's population exceeds the recommended amount of sodium by more than 1 gram per day [British Medical Journal, 2010]
- Most adult populations around the world have mean sodium intakes in excess of 2.4 grams per day [International Journal of Epidemiology, 2009]

## HYPERTENSION



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 34.3% respondents had elevated pressures
- 23.9% hypertensives were not taking blood pressure medication

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **6.6%** of adults Bahamians who have never had their blood pressure measured with an almost 3:1 sex disparity [men 10.5% vs. women 3%]
- **36.7%** raised blood pressure prevalence
- **4 of 10** (or 38%) Bahamians have elevated blood pressures but do not know
- **15.3%** medication non-compliance prevalence [men 50.2% vs. women 63.6%]
- **19.8%** known hypertensives on medication are controlled
- **23.1%** previously diagnosed hypertensives currently taking herbal/traditional remedies. Though no significant sex variation are observed, the middle-aged and elderly are more likely to use these remedies

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- Elevated blood pressure prevalence, 18% AMR [PAHO Core Health Indicators, 2018]

## CHOLESTEROL



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 168.2 mg/dL average total blood cholesterol
- 15.8% respondents had high blood cholesterol

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **153.1 mg/dL** average total blood cholesterol
- **25.3%** prevalence of raised cholesterol or on medication for such

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

<sup>5</sup>WHO recommended daily salt intake is less than or equal to 5 grams (equivalent of 2 grams of sodium)

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## CVD HISTORY & RISK

### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- Not explored



### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **Almost 10% (9.8%)** of Bahamians have a history of a stroke or heart attack
- **1 in 12** Bahamians age 40 to 69 years are at high risk ( $\geq 30\%$ ) for having a stroke or heart attack within the next 10 years

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

## LIFESTYLE ADVISE

### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 55% of respondents received key healthy lifestyle advice



### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **Less than 35%** of the population receives key healthy lifestyle advice during a visit with a doctor and other healthworker
- Engaging in more physically active is the advice most frequently given advice
- During a health visit, a Bahamian man is more likely to get advice on smoking cessation and reducing salt in his diet
- During a health visit, a Bahamian women is more likely to get advice losing weight, reducing the amount of fat and sugary beverages in her diet; and starting (or doing more) exercise.

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- Lifestyle advice should be given at every encounter

## HEALTH SCREENING

### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- Not explored



### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **95.9%** of women are sexually active
- **32.5%** of women have never been screened for cervical cancer. The highest no-screen rates are among women 18 – 44 years old.
- **56.5%** of women have not had a Pap Smear in the past year or more
- Among men 45 years and older, 57.7% have not had a prostate exam in the last one or more. 3.2% have never had a prostate exam.

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

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## HERBAL REMEDIES?



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- 13.4% and 5.7% of respondents with hypertension and diabetes, respectively the advice of a herbal healer
- 10.6% and 8.2% of respondents with hypertension and diabetes, respectively took herbal remedies for their condition
- 5% of respondents with elevated cholesterol took herbal remedies for their condition

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

Disease Condition	Bahamians Seeking Advice From Herbal/ Naturopathic Healer	Bahamians Taking Herbal Medicines
Hypertension	13.7%	23.1%
Diabetes	12.8%	17.7%
Cholesterol	7%	8.7%

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

## ORAL HEALTH



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- Not explored

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **6.9%** population have never received dental care
- **30.3%** of Bahamians visited a dentist in the past year. The majority (45%) of visits related to preventative maintenance, with and another 27.5% visits for some acute problems like oral bleeding or mouth pain
- **46.3%** use dental floss daily
- **56.7%** of Bahamians have some of their natural teeth missing [younger Bahamians 58.8% vs. 54.4% older Bahamians]

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- 67% of Americans visited the dentist at least once in 2014 [American Dental Association Gallup Poll, 2014]

## SEXUAL HEALTH



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- Not explored

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **17 years**, average age of sexual debut
- **11.4%** of Bahamians debuted before age 15 years [men 15.5% vs. women 7.5%]
- Men have double the number of sexual partners compared to women for the same time period
- **34.7%** condom use prevalence during last intercourse
- **9.4%** birth control pill prevalence
- **12.1%** of Bahamians have had an STI [men 10.7% vs. women 13.3%]
- **13.1%** experienced a sex act against his/her will [men 8.1% vs. women 17.6%]

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

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# THE BAHAMAS STEPS Survey 2019

## ROAD SAFETY PRACTICES



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- Not explored

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **44.9%** of drivers do not always use their seatbelts
- **75.4%** of motorcycle/scooter drivers or passengers do not always wear a helmet
- **21.6%** of drivers drove after drinking more than 2 alcoholic drinks
- **19.4%** of passengers admit to driving in vehicle where the driver had more than 2 alcoholic drinks
- **20.5%** of drivers admitting to using cellphones daily and often while driving
- **19%** of passengers admitting to being in a vehicle with a distracted driver

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- Front seat belt wearing rates Canada 95%, Guyana 95%, USA 90%, Brazil 79%, Jamaica 54% and Cuba 35% [Global Status Report on Road Safety, 2018]

## SUICIDE



### WHAT WE KNEW IN 2012

- Not explored

### WHAT'S NEW FROM STEPS 2019

- **6.3%** of Bahamians seriously considered attempting suicide with male suicide attempts being more than 2X that of females [men 8.7% vs. women 4.1%]
- **2.6%** of Bahamians have made a suicide plan in the last year [men 0.7% vs women 4.4%]
- **1.8%** suicide attempt lifetime prevalence
- Almost 2% of Bahamians have a family member who committed suicide

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- In the United States, 4.3% of adults have suicidal ideations; and 0.6% attempted suicide [2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health]
- For every 1 suicide death there is 25 to 30 attempts [Public Health Agency of Canada]