



## **Mental Illness and Addictions: Facts and Statistics**

The terms 'mental illness' and 'addiction' refer to a wide range of disorders that affect mood, thinking and behaviour. Examples include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, as well as substance use disorders and problem gambling. Mental illness and addictions can be associated with distress and/or impairment of functioning. Symptoms vary from mild to severe.

### **Prevalence**

- In any given year, 1 in 5 Canadians experiences a mental health or addiction problem.<sup>1</sup>

### **Who is affected?**

- 70% of mental health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence.<sup>2</sup>
- Young people aged 15 to 24 are more likely to experience mental illness and/or substance use disorders than any other age group.<sup>3</sup>
- Men have higher rates of addiction than women, while women have higher rates of mood and anxiety disorders.<sup>3</sup>
- People with a mental illness are twice as likely to have a substance use problem compared to the general population. At least 20% of people with a mental illness have a co-occurring substance use problem.<sup>4</sup>
- Similarly, people with substance use problems are up to 3 times more likely to have a mental illness. More than 15% of people with a substance use problem have a co-occurring mental illness.<sup>4</sup>
- Canadians in the lowest income group are 3 to 4 times more likely than those in the highest income group to report poor to fair mental health.<sup>5</sup>
- Studies in various Canadian cities indicate that between 23% and 67% of homeless people report having a mental illness.<sup>6</sup>

### **Morbidity and mortality**

- Mental illness is a leading cause of disability in Canada.<sup>7, 8, 9</sup>
- The disease burden of mental illness and addiction in Ontario is 1.5 times higher than all cancers put together and more than 7 times that of all infectious diseases. This includes years lived with less than full function and years lost to early death.<sup>8</sup>
- Tobacco use is the leading cause of premature mortality in Canada. Evidence suggests that smoking is responsible for about 17% of all deaths.<sup>10</sup>
- Among Ontarians aged 25 to 34, 1 of every 8 deaths is related to opioid use.<sup>11</sup>
- Nearly 4,000 Canadians die by suicide each year – an average of more than 10 suicides a day.<sup>12</sup>
  - About 230,000 Ontarians, or 2.2% of the population, report having seriously contemplated suicide in the past year.<sup>13</sup>

- More than 75% of suicides involve men, but women attempt suicide 3 to 4 times more often.<sup>12, 14</sup>
- After accidents, suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth and young adults. Suicide accounts for about 12% of deaths among youth aged 10 to 14 and 23% of deaths among youth aged 15 to 24.<sup>12</sup>
- First Nations youth die by suicide about 5 to 6 times more often than non-Aboriginal youth. Suicide rates for Inuit youth are among the highest in the world, at 11 times the national average.<sup>15</sup>

## Stigma

- Just 50% of Canadians would tell friends or co-workers that they have a family member with a mental illness, compared to 72% who would discuss a diagnosis of cancer and 68% who would talk about a family member having diabetes.<sup>16</sup>
- 42% of Canadians are unsure whether they would socialize with a friend who has a mental illness.<sup>16</sup>
- 55% of Canadians say they would be unlikely to enter a spousal relationship with someone who has a mental illness.<sup>16</sup>
- 46% of Canadians think people use the term mental illness as an excuse for bad behaviour, and 27% say they would be fearful of being around someone who suffers from serious mental illness.<sup>16</sup>
- 64% of Ontario workers would be concerned about how work would be affected if a colleague had a mental illness.<sup>17</sup>
- 39% of Ontario workers indicate that they would not tell their managers if they were experiencing a mental health problem.<sup>17</sup>

## Access to services

- While mental illnesses constitute more than 15% of the burden of disease in Canada, these illnesses receive less than 6% of health care dollars.<sup>18</sup>
- Almost a third of Canadians who seek mental health care report that their needs are unmet or partially met.<sup>3</sup> The rate is even higher for children and youth.<sup>19</sup>
- 60% of family physicians rank access to psychiatrists in Ontario as fair to poor.<sup>20</sup>

## Costs to society

- Individuals with a mental illness are much less likely to be employed.<sup>21</sup> Unemployment rates are as high as 70% to 90% for people with the most severe mental illnesses.<sup>22</sup>
- In any given week, at least 500,000 employed Canadians are unable to work due to mental health problems. This includes:
  - approximately 355,000 disability cases due to mental and/or behavioural disorders<sup>23</sup> plus
  - approximately 175,000 full-time workers absent from work due to mental illness.<sup>24</sup>
- The economic burden of mental illness in Canada is estimated at \$51 billion per year. This includes health care costs, lost productivity, and reductions in health-related quality of life.<sup>25</sup>
- In Ontario the annual cost of alcohol-related health care, law enforcement, corrections, lost productivity, and other problems is estimated to be \$5.3 billion.<sup>10</sup>
- A growing body of international evidence demonstrates that promotion, prevention, and early intervention initiatives show positive returns on investment.<sup>23, 26</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smetanin et al (2011). The life and economic impact of major mental illnesses in Canada: 2011-2041.

<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada (2006). The human face of mental health and mental illness in Canada.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada (2013). Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health.

<sup>4</sup> Rush et al (2008). Prevalence of co-occurring substance use and other mental disorders in the Canadian population.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada (2003). Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health.

<sup>6</sup> Canadian Institute for Health Information (2007). Improving the health of Canadians: Mental health and homelessness.

<sup>7</sup> Mental Health Commission of Canada (2014). Why investing in mental health will contribute to Canada's economic prosperity and to the sustainability of our health care system.

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