



NHCC

NEUROLOGICAL HEALTH CHARITIES CANADA

News Release

Landmark study reveals impacts of neurological conditions on Canadians

September 11, 2014 - Canadians with neurological conditions, caregivers and representatives from Neurological Health Charities Canada celebrate the completion of the National Population Health Study of Neurological Conditions, the first Canadian study of its kind. Earlier today, during her opening remarks at an international gathering of dementia experts, the Honourable Rona Ambrose, Canada's Minister of Health, announced the release of the study's report, *Mapping Connections: An Understanding of Neurological Conditions in Canada*. The report highlights key findings from the study, identifying the impacts neurological conditions have on affected individuals, their families and the health care system.

With a federal investment of \$15 million, the study was undertaken from 2009 to 2013 as a joint partnership between the Government of Canada and Neurological Health Charities Canada, a collaborative of 24 health charity organizations representing the voice of individuals and families impacted by neurological conditions across Canada.

"We are proud to have partnered with the Government of Canada on this study," said Joyce Gordon, Chair of Neurological Health Charities Canada, after the report was released. "The study represents a new level of collaboration within the neurological community, and provides findings that have the potential to significantly improve the lives of Canadians living with neurological conditions, their families and caregivers."

The study involved 130 researchers and clinicians from 30 institutions across Canada, as well as 177,000 Canadians affected by neurological conditions who offered insight and personal experience into key areas of the study. The study provides rich new information about neurological conditions in Canada. It also highlights remaining knowledge gaps and identifies areas, which, if addressed, could significantly reduce the negative impacts of neurological conditions on individuals, families, health care systems and society.

Key Findings:

- Neurological conditions affect more than 3.6 million Canadians, including more than 50 per cent of Canadians receiving home care or living in long-term care facilities.
- The prevalence of unemployment among those with a neurological condition was five times higher than in the general population (12 times higher with migraine excluded).
- People living with a neurological condition used more health care services than those living with other chronic conditions.
- Canadian adults with a neurological condition were twice as likely to report

Members:

ALS Society of Canada
Alzheimer Society of Canada
Alzheimer Society of Ontario
Brain Injury Association of Canada
Canadian Alliance of Brain Tumour Organizations
Canadian Epilepsy Alliance
Canadian Neurological Sciences Federation
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The Foundation Fighting Blindness
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Muscular Dystrophy Canada
Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy
Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation
Ontario Rett Syndrome Association
Parkinson Society Canada
Parkinson Societies in Ontario
Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario
Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada

Key Findings Cont'd:

- Canadian adults with a neurological condition were twice as likely to report symptoms consistent with depression compared with those without neurological conditions.
- Caregiver distress was more than twice as high for those caring for individuals with neurological conditions.
- Thirty-five per cent of adults with a neurological condition reported that their family had experienced a financial crisis in the previous year.
- Over the next 20 years, the number of new cases of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and Parkinson's disease is expected to almost double, as are the total annual health costs for these conditions. The number of Canadians hospitalized with a traumatic brain injury is projected to increase by 28 per cent.

Quotes

"The Canadian Epilepsy Alliance, a member of Neurological Health Charities Canada, is delighted by the release of 'Mapping Connections' in which Epilepsy was one of the priority conditions. This study will help provide greater understanding of the impacts that living with a neurological condition can have on people and families; identify gaps where more research is needed; and foster continuing partnerships, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life for Canadians affected by a neurological condition." Gail Dempsey, President, Canadian Epilepsy Alliance

"The Dystonia Medical Research Foundation Canada is proud to have been a collaborative partner in Canada's first-ever population health study of neurological conditions. We applaud the efforts of the thousands of volunteers across Canada who engaged in this study." Diane Gillespie, Executive Director, Dystonia Medical Research Foundation Canada

"The National Population Health Study of Neurological Conditions is unique in that it represents a collaboration between so many groups and individuals (e.g. patients, advocacy groups, health care leaders, researchers and other key stakeholders). The information generated from this important study has paved the way to help us improve neurological care and to guide future research needs in Canada and beyond." - Dr. Nathalie Jette and Dr. Tamara Pringsheim, study researchers

"This study brought funding to research to enhance outcomes for persons with neurological conditions. The collective impact achieved through the partnerships and networks built through the study will be best advanced and achieve the greatest value from the Government of Canada's investment by taking the critical next step – collective ACTION." Dr. Richard J. Riopelle, McGill University, Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery; Chair, Advocacy Committee, Canadian Neurological Sciences Federation; Chief Research Officer, Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation

Learn More

- Read the report: [Mapping Connections: An Understanding of Neurological Conditions in Canada](#)
- Visit the [NHCC website](#) or the [Public Health Agency of Canada website](#)

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Media Inquiries:

Deanna Huggett, Director Strategic Initiatives
Neurological Health Charities Canada
(519) 902-3354
deanna.huggett@mybrainmatters.ca
www.MyBrainMatters.ca