



The Daily

Statistics Canada

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Releases

Study: Depression and work impairment

2002

Around half a million Canadian workers experience depression and most of them say the symptoms interfere with their ability to work, according to a new study.

Data from the 2002 Canadian Community Health Survey, which focused on mental health and well-being, show that almost 4% of workers aged 25 to 64 had experienced depression in the 12 months before the survey.

The *Health Reports* study "Depression and work impairment," revealed that the workers most prone to depression were those who regularly worked evening or night shifts, along with those employed in sales or service.

Nearly 8 out of 10 (79%) workers who had experienced depression in the year before they were interviewed reported that the symptoms had interfered with their ability to work, at least to some extent. Almost one in five (19%) reported a very severe degree of interference.

Depressed workers reported an average of 32 days in the previous year when their symptoms left them either unable to carry out normal activities or totally unable to work.

This study reinforces other research, which found that several crucial elements of job performance, such as time management, concentration, teamwork and overall output, are particularly vulnerable to depressive symptoms.

Shift workers more likely to be depressed

A number of job-related factors, such as shift work, hours of work, work stress and occupation, were associated with depression.

Men and women who worked evening or night shifts were more likely to be depressed than those who had a regular day-time schedule.

The prevalence of depression was relatively high among workers who spent fewer than 30 hours a week on the job, and lower among those who worked more than 40 hours.

People who described most days at work as stressful were more likely than those reporting less stress to have had a depressive episode in the year before the survey. This is consistent with other research that has shown

Note to readers

This release is based on the Health Reports article "Depression and work impairment." The study was done using data from the 2002 Canadian Community Health Survey: Mental Health and Well-being, and from the 1994/1995 to 2002/2003 National Population Health Survey.

a relationship between work stress and psychological disorders.

Workers in sales or service and those in white-collar jobs were more likely than blue-collar workers to have experienced depression.

Work impairment more likely among depressed workers

Relatively high percentages of workers who had experienced depression reported specific forms of work impairment. These included reduced activities because of a long-term health condition, at least one mental health disability day in the past two weeks, and absence from work in the previous week.

About 29% of workers who had had a recent episode of depression reported reduced work activities because of a long-term health condition. This was three times the proportion of only 10% among those with no history of depression.

As well, 13% of workers who had experienced depression reported at least one day in the previous two weeks when they had to stay in bed, or cut down on normal activities, or their daily activities took extra effort, because of emotional or mental health or the use of alcohol or drugs.

Only 1% of workers with no history of depression had taken a mental health disability day in the previous two weeks.

Also, 16% of workers who had had a recent depressive episode had been absent from work in the past week, twice the proportion of 7% of those who had never had a depressive episode.

Even when other possible influences were considered, these associations between depression and work impairment persisted.

Impact of depression on job performance can persist

This study also examined, over a two-year period, the association between depression and subsequent

work impairment, using longitudinal data from the first five cycles of the National Population Health Survey.

Workers who had been depressed were 1.4 times as likely to report reduced work activities two years later because of a long-term physical or mental health condition, compared with workers who had not had a recent depressive episode.

As well, two years later, workers who had had a depressive episode were 1.8 times as likely to report having taken at least one disability day in the past two weeks.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3225 and 5015.

The article "Depression and work impairment" is included in the latest edition of *Health Reports*, Vol. 18, no. 1 (82-003-XWE, free), now available from the *Publications* module of our website.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this article, contact Heather Gilmour (613-951-2114; Heather.Gilmour@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division.

For more information about *Health Reports*, contact Christine Wright (613-951-1765; Christine.Wright@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division. ■

Study: Medically unexplained physical symptoms

2002 and 2003

A substantial number of Canadians report symptoms of conditions that cannot be definitively identified through physical examination or medical testing.

These are known as "medically unexplained physical symptoms," and they characterize conditions such as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, and/or multiple chemical sensitivity.

This new *Health Reports* study, "Medically unexplained physical symptoms," reveals that in 2003, 5% of Canadians aged 12 or older, an estimated 1.2 million people, had at least one of these three conditions.

About 1.3% of the population reported chronic fatigue syndrome, which is characterized by extreme tiredness.

About 1.5% reported fibromyalgia, which involves pain lasting three months or more in at least 11 of 18 specified areas.

About 2.4% reported multiple chemical sensitivity. People with this disorder develop a variety of symptoms when they are exposed to synthetic chemicals in doses that usually have no noticeable effect.

Among individuals with medically unexplained physical symptoms, about 14% had at least two of the three conditions.

Data from the 2003 Canadian Community Health Survey show the percentage of women with each of the three conditions was about double that of men.

As well, the proportion of people reporting at least one of the three conditions rose from 1.6% at ages 12 to 24 and peaked at 6.9% at ages 45 to 64. Among seniors, 6.0% were affected.

Each of the three conditions was more common among people in lower income households than among those in the highest income households.

According to the 2002 Canadian Community Health Survey, 21% of people with medically unexplained physical symptoms had at least one psychiatric disorder, such as depression, bipolar I disorder, panic disorder, social anxiety disorder and agoraphobia. In contrast, only 8% of people who did not have these unexplained symptoms had one or more psychiatric disorders.

The prevalence of mental disorders was particularly common among people reporting chronic fatigue syndrome.

More than one-quarter (27%) of people with medically unexplained symptoms needed help with activities such as meal preparation, everyday housework, getting to appointments and running errands. This was four times the proportion of only 7% among people who did not report any of the conditions.

Relatively large proportions of people with medically unexplained physical symptoms sought assistance from conventional and alternative health care providers.

In 2003, 22% of people with these conditions reported having consulted general practitioners more than 10 times in the year before the survey, compared with just 7% of people who did not report these conditions.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3226 and 5015.

The article "Medically unexplained physical symptoms" is included in the latest edition of *Health Reports*, Vol. 18, no. 1 (82-003-XWE, free), now available from the *Publications* module of our website.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this article, contact Jungwee Park (613-951-4598; Jungwee.Park@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division.

For more information about *Health Reports*, contact Christine Wright (613-951-1765; Christine.Wright@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division. ■

Domestic travel

Fourth quarter 2005 (preliminary)

The preliminary estimates of domestic travel from the Travel Survey of Residents of Canada are now available for the fourth quarter of 2005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3810.

For general information or to obtain data, contact Client Services (613-951-9169; 1-800-307-3382; fax: 613-951-2909; cult.tourstats@statcan.ca), Culture Tourism, and the Centre for Education Statistics. To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Annie Gilbert (613-951-4483; fax: 613-951-2909; annie.gilbert@statcan.ca), Tourism Statistics Program. ■

New products

Health Reports, Vol. 18, no. 1
Catalogue number 82-003-XWE
(free).

All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.

Catalogue numbers with an -XWE, -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; -XPB or -XPE are paper versions; -XDB or -XDE are electronic versions on diskette; -XCB or -XCE are electronic versions on compact disc; -XVB or -XVE are electronic versions on DVD and -XBB or -XBE a database.

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Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
For release at 9:30 a.m.



MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1995** 2
Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 150 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1995** 4
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses and unit labour cost in 1995 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

- **Map-based Index: May 1997** 3
- **Short-term Expectations Survey** 3
- **Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997** 12
- **Egg production, Apr 1997** 12

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Release dates: January 15 to 19, 2007

(Release dates are subject to change.)

Release date	Title	Reference period
15	Investment in non-residential building construction	Fourth quarter 2006
15	New motor vehicle sales	November 2006
15	Consulting Engineering Services Price Index	2005
16	Earnings Losses of Displaced Workers: Canadian Evidence from a Large Administrative Database on Firm Closures and Mass Layoffs	
16	Standard Geographical Classification	2006
17	Marriages	2003
17	Service industries newsletter	2005
18	Monthly Survey of Manufacturing	November 2006
18	Canada's international transactions in securities	November 2006
18	Travel between Canada and other countries	November 2006
19	Wholesale trade	November 2006
