

Why we are Worried: The Facts

Cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases

After cancer, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases (commonly known as heart disease, stroke and aneurysm) are the leading causes of death in Canada (Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health [CADTH], 2012). Cardiovascular diseases encompass diseases of the heart and blood vessels, while cerebrovascular diseases refer to diseases of the blood vessels supplying the brain (CADTH, 2012).

Research has found that some population groups are more prone to cardiovascular disease. First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are more likely to have high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes puts them “at an even greater risk of heart disease and stroke than the general population” (Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, 2011). Members of some visible minorities are at greater risk than average too. For example, Black and South Asian Ontarians have a two-fold risk of developing diabetes and significantly higher hypertension rates (Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, 2010).

Did you know...

- It is estimated that there is a death from heart disease or stroke every seven minutes in Canada (Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, 2012).
- The WHO (2011) estimates that nearly 23.6 million people will die from cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, mainly heart disease and stroke, by 2030.
- After quitting smoking, a person reduces his or her risk of a smoking-related heart attack by half after just one year (Canadian Cancer Society, 2011).

Fiscal implications:

- Total (direct and indirect) cardiovascular disease costs in Canada were estimated to be nearly \$21 billion in 2005 (Thériault, Stonebridge, & Browarski, 2010). The authors note previous research projecting that by reining in the number of cases of heart and stroke, by modifying lifestyles and risk factors, Canadians could save more than \$76 billion between 2005 and 2020 – some \$5 billion every year.

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