

Why we are Worried: The Facts

Lung disease

Chronic respiratory diseases are “chronic diseases of the airways and other parts of the lung” (Public Health Agency of Canada [PHAC], 2011).

It has been estimated that more than 3 million Canadians have one of five serious respiratory diseases: asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), lung cancer, tuberculosis (TB) and cystic fibrosis (PHAC, 2007, p. vii). Other respiratory diseases include influenza, pneumonia, bronchiolitis, respiratory distress syndrome and sleep apnea (PHAC, 2007, p. vii).

After cardiovascular disease and cancer, respiratory diseases account for the most hospitalizations and deaths (PHAC, 2007, p. 4). Tobacco is the most important preventable risk factor for chronic respiratory diseases (PHAC, 2007, p. vii). “In the short term, smoking cessation among adults would have the greatest impact on reducing respiratory diseases, such as lung cancer and COPD” (PHAC, 2007, p. vii).

Did you know...

- “In 2004, respiratory diseases, including lung cancer, represented the third most common main diagnosis contributing to the hospitalization of both men and women. They were the primary diagnosis for 11.9% of all hospitalizations for men and (excepting pregnancy-related admissions) 10.5% of those for women” (PHAC, 2007, p. 3).
- “The three most common respiratory diseases — lung cancer (17,655 deaths), COPD (9,607), influenza and pneumonia (5,729) — were responsible for the deaths of 32,989 people (17,845 men and 15,144 women) in 2004” (PHAC, 2007, p. 3).

Fiscal implications:

- Respiratory diseases account for approximately \$15 billion (Canadian Lung Association, 2011) — or nearly 7.4 per cent — of total health care costs in Canada based on \$200 billion annual spending (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2011).

References

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