



ADHD: a Significant Health Risk - Key Messages

A recent study found that ADHD shortens one's life expectancy by up to 22 years if persistent into adulthood. That is 2.5 times greater than the top four risk factors that we focus on as a society combined; such as obesity, alcohol use, smoking, and coronary heart disease.

Each year public health agencies throughout Canada spend billions of dollars on strategies and initiatives to influence life style behaviours and health outcomes such as alcohol consumption, nutrition, exercise, obesity, and tobacco use – yet is there no focus on ADHD!

Some Reasons for Reduced Life Expectancy

- More brain and physical injuries, including car accidents (45% increase) – more risk of aggression both as perpetrator and victim
- Greater risk for comorbid psychiatric disorder - 80% of adults and 44% of children with ADHD have at least one
- 3x risk of obesity / higher risk for Type 2 diabetes: teen (2.83); adult (3.28) / 3.5 x risk of eating disorders in female
- Greater risk of cardiovascular disease
- Greater use of tobacco, marijuana and alcohol and more difficulty quitting
- 32.2% of students with ADHD do not graduate high school - 20% less likely to be employed and earn an average of 16% less than their counterparts
- 33% of inmates in Canada have ADHD

Therefore, The Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada (CADDAC) is asking that each province and territory develop a working group on ADHD to explore the economic and societal costs associated with ADHD.

These groups would consider measures to build awareness and understanding of this health risk and improve access to assessment and treatment; thereby leading to reduced physical and mental health risks, better academic outcomes and improved workplace productivity and success.