



Canadians Continue to Underrecognize a Serious Precursor to Mental Health Disorders

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A new paper, [ADHD and Mental Health](#), authored by the Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC), highlights the fact that ADHD is a significant precursor to additional mental health conditions. The underdiagnosis and undertreatment of ADHD leads to a lifetime of negative messages, unfair judgement, lack of success and unnecessary suffering fueling unhealthy self medication and additional mental health disorders.

Shannon Limoges, an adult living with ADHD, shares her own struggles, "The denial of adult ADHD and it's profound impact on my life by medical professionals has caused me decades of unnecessary trauma due to misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatments and the exacerbation of my PTSD. It's hard enough dealing with that sort of invalidation when it comes from friends, family and the general public - getting it over and over again from professionals, at times when you're vulnerable because you're trying to get help, is harmful on a whole other level. I have only survived by educating myself about ADHD and through the validation of peers in the ADHD community."

Of the 1.8 million Canadians who have ADHD, 44% of the children and 80% of the adults also have a least one coexisting mental health disorder: up to 70% with ADHD have experienced depression in their lifetime, with one in four women having attempted suicide; 40% of children and 50% of adults with ADHD suffer with anxiety and 12% have an eating disorder; 60% of children with OCD have ADHD. As high as 50% of individuals with a substance use disorder (SUD) also have ADHD. Research suggests that substances are sought to relieve untreated ADHD symptoms and not to seek a high. Research also suggests that early diagnosis and treatment of ADHD can act as a preventive intervention for the development of SUDs in people with ADHD.

This October, ADHD Awareness month, The Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada, CADDAC, is drawing attention to the enormous cost to Canadians, in funds and mental wellness, of not diagnosing and treating ADHD disorders, compared to the cost of providing proper treatment. Successful treatment is attainable and life changing for those impacted by ADHD however, ADHD assessments and multimodal treatments can be costly and difficult to obtain. A Canadian study found that only 52% of general practitioners were comfortable assessing for and diagnosing ADHD, compared to 78% who are comfortable assessing and diagnosing mood disorders. Perhaps this is why many with ADHD frequently go undiagnosed for their ADHD and incorrectly treated for anxiety and depression.

CADDAC is calling on Provincial Health and Mental Health Ministries to start to recognize ADHD as a serious mental health disorder and a precursor to additional disorders by immediately developing an expert advisory committee on ADHD. Those impacted by ADHD are being asked to [e-mail their elected](#)

[officials](#) to voice their support for increased ADHD Awareness and medical support. ADHD has been under recognized and under funded as a serious mental health issue for far too long at a significant cost to Canadian mental health and society.

About CADDAC

CADDAC is a national charity that improves the lives of Canadians affected by ADHD through awareness, education, and advocacy. For more information visit caddac.ca

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