Depression in the workplace in Canada

Workplace depression is a major issue across different cultures and economies, with devastating consequences.

Lifetime prevalence of depression in Canada: 12.6% or 3.2 million

For more information on the IDEA Survey as well as the LSE Health and Social Care research centre, visit the centre’s blog: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/healthandsocialcare/

The report was initiated by, and is sponsored by H. Lundbeck A/S. The opinions expressed by the report author from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) do not necessarily represent the opinions of H. Lundbeck A/S

Depression costs Canada more than US$9 billion in lost productivity (absence from work, and attending work while unwell)\(^1\)

\[\text{US$9b} \quad \text{US$3.5b} \]

\[\text{Lost Productivity} \quad \text{Canadian Foreign Aid Budget} \]

\[x2.5 \text{ higher than the total Canadian budget for foreign aid}^2\]

\[\text{Montreal Canadiens} \]

Depression-related presenteeism\(^*\) costs Canada US$6.8 billion\(^1\)

\[\text{Presenteeism: US$6.8b} \quad \text{Absenteeism: US$2.5b} \]

\[\text{Montreal Canadiens US$0.8b} \]

Presenteeism (attending work while unwell)

Absenteeism (unscheduled absence from work)

Value of the Montreal Canadiens


The cognitive symptoms of depression, for instance difficulties in concentrating, making decisions and remembering, are present up to 94% of the time during an episode of depression\(^1\), causing significant impairment in work function and productivity\(^2\)


Cognitive symptoms are a crucial factor affecting workplace performance in people with depression

McIntyre RS et al. Compr Psychiatry. 2015; 56:279–82

35% of Canadian employees are highly educated

Highly educated employees with depression are likely to...

- Work in a highly demanding job and therefore be severely impacted by the cognitive symptoms of depression
- Manage others so the impact of their depression has wider consequences

Days taken off work during an episode of depression

Canadian employees are likely to keep working during an episode of depression, impacting their productivity and performance at work


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