

MEDIA COMMUNIQUÉ

(December 18, 2014)

The Canadian Continenence Foundation (TCCF) today released two documents, researched and written for them by The Cameron Institute, entitled – “Incontinence: The Canadian Perspective”, and “The Impact of Incontinence in Canada”. Urinary incontinence and fecal incontinence are the last two “taboo” health conditions which need light shed upon them.

The most common form of incontinence, urinary incontinence, affects individuals’ ability to function in daily life. Canadians with urinary incontinence have more frequent visits to their physicians and spend more time in hospitals and nursing homes than those Canadians without it.

The prevalence of incontinence in Canada is about 10% of the population. That means approximately 3.5 million Canadians experience some form of incontinence. Individual research estimates for the prevalence of incontinence in Canada range from 2% to 50% of the population, depending upon the study, the research method, and the questions posed. For example, asking the question “are you incontinent?” will garner a dramatically lower rate of positive responses than the question “do you suffer from occasional leakage of urine?” There tends to be a greater prevalence of incontinence amongst women than men; it is believed that this difference is related to female child-bearing and other factors.

The number of individuals living with incontinence is likely to increase as the population ages, since the prevalence of the condition tends to increase with age. Incontinence occurs in more than half of community-dwelling women 45 years old and older; almost one of five women in the community reported urinary incontinence affecting normal activities.

Incontinence is not only costly to individuals, but also to employers and the health care system. An individual with incontinence will spend \$1,400-\$2,100 per year on products. Furthermore, incontinence cost Canadian employers over 11.5 million person-days of lost work, and over \$2 billion in lost productivity in 2013. Incontinence also added \$3.8 billion in health care costs to the Canadian system and in total, incontinence cost Canadians nearly \$8.5 billion last year.

Amongst its 10 recommendations to policy-makers, TCCF urges governments to:

- Increase education about incontinence to both the public and health professionals.
- Include all drugs to treat urinary incontinence on provincial formularies.
- Increase the daily funding allotment for absorbent products in long term care facilities to allow the use

of a new containment product as required.

- Provide equal access to continence care and treatment across the country.

Both reports are available at www.canadiancontinence.ca.

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Founded in 1986, The Canadian Continence Foundation (formerly The Simon Foundation for Continence Canada) is the only national non-profit organization serving the interest of people experiencing incontinence.

The Cameron Institute is a not-for-profit, public policy think tank specializing in the independent study of health, social, and economic issues.