



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

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More Younger Canadians Using Community-based Services for Substance Use Withdrawal

Ottawa, March 29, 2019 — More young Canadians are using community detoxification services than older adults, according to a new report by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA).

The Withdrawal Management Services in Canada: The National Treatment Indicators Report provides an overview of how publicly funded withdrawal management services are used in Canada. The report, featuring data from 2015–2016, for the first time includes provincial data on withdrawal-related hospital admissions.

Use of community-based withdrawal management services was highest in people aged 25–34 (31%), as opposed to just 19% of people aged 45–54. In contrast, hospital-based withdrawal management services were accessed most by 45–54 year-olds (26%). Only 16% of withdrawal-related hospitalizations involved individuals aged 25–34 years.

Other key findings from the report include:

- Withdrawal management accounted for 30% of substance use-related hospitalizations and 25% of all community-based substance use disorder treatments.
- Over 27,900 individuals accessed community-based withdrawal management services across seven provinces.
- There were over 11,750 hospitalizations for substance use-related withdrawal management for all jurisdictions, except Quebec.
- More males (69%) accessed withdrawal management services than females (31%).

Withdrawal management services, often referred to as detox, provide medical and emotional support to manage the symptoms of withdrawal from substance dependence in a safe environment. .

“Accessing support to manage the symptoms of withdrawal is often one of the first steps an individual can take to address a substance use disorder,” explains report co-author, Bridget Hall, a CCSA research and policy analyst. “Our findings highlight a clear need to tailor treatment services, such as withdrawal management, to the unique needs of individuals, particularly in response to their age or gender. Understanding how these services are used in Canada is key to improving the quality and range of treatment options available to support people with substance use disorders.”

The NTI report is the only national, accessible source of information on publicly funded substance use treatment programs in Canada. The report analysed hospitalization data from ten jurisdictions across Canada supplied by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, as well as data from community withdrawal management services across seven jurisdictions.

CCSA was created in 1988 by an Act of Parliament to provide national leadership on matters of substance use in Canada. Its non-partisan, evidence-based work informs decision and policy making at all levels of the Canadian government.

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CCSA was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives.

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