



Workplace Safety Among the Biggest Factors Influencing the Opioid Crisis in Canada

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The opioid crisis is a widespread problem, going beyond the United States and affecting other countries around the globe. Canada, for example, is also dealing with the many effects of opioid abuse. In fact, more than 9,000 Canadians died from apparent opioid-related overdoses in 2016 alone.

The opioid crisis is the most pressing public health concern in Canada, and experts are now looking for ways to lessen its impact, address the problem, and provide a solution as quickly as possible. The federal government admits that 11 people die from an opioid-related overdose every day.

Coming up with a plan to deal with this problem involves identifying the various factors that influence drug abuse. The reasons for opioid use are complex and varied, but it is possible to track down the root cause of addictive behavior.

Researchers are now recognizing the potential effect of workplace injuries and how it worsens the opioid crisis.

Workplace Injuries Worsen the Opioid Crisis. Workplace injuries occur regularly, and it is often overlooked when it comes to its role in the opioid crisis. It goes without saying that injuries of all kinds exacerbate this problem. Workplace injury in Canada, in particular, remains steadily on the rise. At Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), injury claims have risen by 33 percent.

Construction is Canada's deadliest industry. At the same time, the staff members who manage cases have declined by 9 percent. And with critical injuries also seeing a steady increase, more and more workers are being prescribed with opioids and similar painkillers.

According to a study from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, workers in industries with higher rates of injuries were six times more likely than average to die from an opioid overdose. Char Robbins, a 32-year old construction worker from Ontario, died from a Fentanyl overdose in November 2017. His addiction started after he fell from a roof and got seriously injured on the job.

According to government figures, 77 percent of people who have died from opioid-related overdoses were men, most were between 30 and 39 years old. More than 1,250 people in Ontario died from an apparent opioid-related overdose, hitting smaller cities particularly hard.

The Workers Community Legal Clinic (IWC) based in Ontario, recommends improving workplace health and safety to help mitigate the risk of opioid abuse. IWC suggests a holistic approach that focuses on individual drug users and their workplace safety.

While this will not solve the opioid crisis on its own, it could help prevent the problem from getting even worse. From 2001 to 2010, the IWC notes that 40 percent more injured workers were being prescribed with opioids for pain treatment.

Public health agencies are encouraging doctors to prescribe painkillers less. The WSIB has taken this approach and has reduced the number of claims for opioids by 47 percent.

Addicted individuals should look for nearby rehab facilities in order to receive proper addiction treatment. A comprehensive program that caters to the individual's specific needs may be necessary to eliminate the physical and mental health effects of opioid abuse.

While prescription painkillers still have their medical value, there is no doubt that they have a high risk of abuse. If the doctor prescribes this type of medication, it is best to keep in touch with them and report any side effects. Patients are advised to stick with their prescription carefully and not take larger doses because these habit-forming drugs can easily cause addiction.

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