

Health Reports: Canadians vulnerable to workplace noise

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, August 15, 2018

More than half of the estimated 11 million Canadians who have worked in noisy environments were not required to use hearing protection and only did so occasionally if at all. These workers may be vulnerable to adverse outcomes from excessive noise that include hearing loss, tinnitus, stress and other negative health conditions.

A new study released in today's *Health Reports* examines the characteristics of these workers. Among the 7.7 million men in noisy workplaces, 3.7 million (48%) were classified as vulnerable to noise. In contrast, 2.4 million (72%) of the 3.3 million women were vulnerable to noise. These workers were more likely than those who had never worked in a noisy environment to report having hearing difficulties and tinnitus.

Although people in blue-collar occupations were more likely than those in white-collar occupations to work in noisy environments, they were less likely to be vulnerable to excessive noise—39% compared with 66%, which may reflect a culture of hearing protection in industries with noisy work environments. Self-employed workers are exempt from health and safety regulations and are not required to wear hearing protection. They were more likely than employees to be vulnerable to workplace noise. This includes farmers who have been identified as a group at risk of hearing difficulties and loss from work-related noise.

Note to readers

This study was based on a sample of 6,571 respondents (3,250 men and 3,321 women) aged 19 to 79 to the Canadian Health Measures Survey cycles 3 (2012 to 2013) and 4 (2014 to 2015). The combined cycle 3 and 4 response rate for the household and mobile examination centres components was 52.7%. The weighted sample from cycles 3 (n=3,288) and 4 (n=3,283) represented a population of 25.9 million Canadians.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5071](#).

"Canadians vulnerable to workplace noise" is now available in the August 2018 online issue of *Health Reports*, Vol. 29, no. 8 ([82-003-X](#)).

This issue of *Health Reports* also contains the article "[Using data linkage to report surgical treatment of breast cancer in Canada](#)."

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