

ECONOMIC BURDEN OF UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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In Canada, injury ranks third behind cardiovascular and musculoskeletal disease in terms of societal economic burden. Yet it is still a predominantly hidden epidemic and ranks last in terms of research spending (Health Canada, 1997).

Gaining a better understanding of the economic dimensions of injury is fundamental to setting policy priorities.

OBJECTIVE

To uncover health care costs and societal productivity losses attributable to unintentional injury in British Columbia

METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

- Mortality data, 1998 (BC Vital Statistics Agency)
- Acute Hospital Separation data, 1998 (BC Ministry of Health)
- External Causes of Unintentional Injuries, ICD-9
- Databook on Nonfatal Injury: Incidence, Costs and Consequences

Costs Estimation Methods

Incidence Costing

This is most appropriate methodology when considering prevention strategies.

Direct Costs

Hospitalized Injuries

Includes hospital, medical, rehabilitation and paramedical costs during the hospital stay, and continued rehabilitation and community-based care beyond the initial treatment phase.

Non-hospitalized Injuries

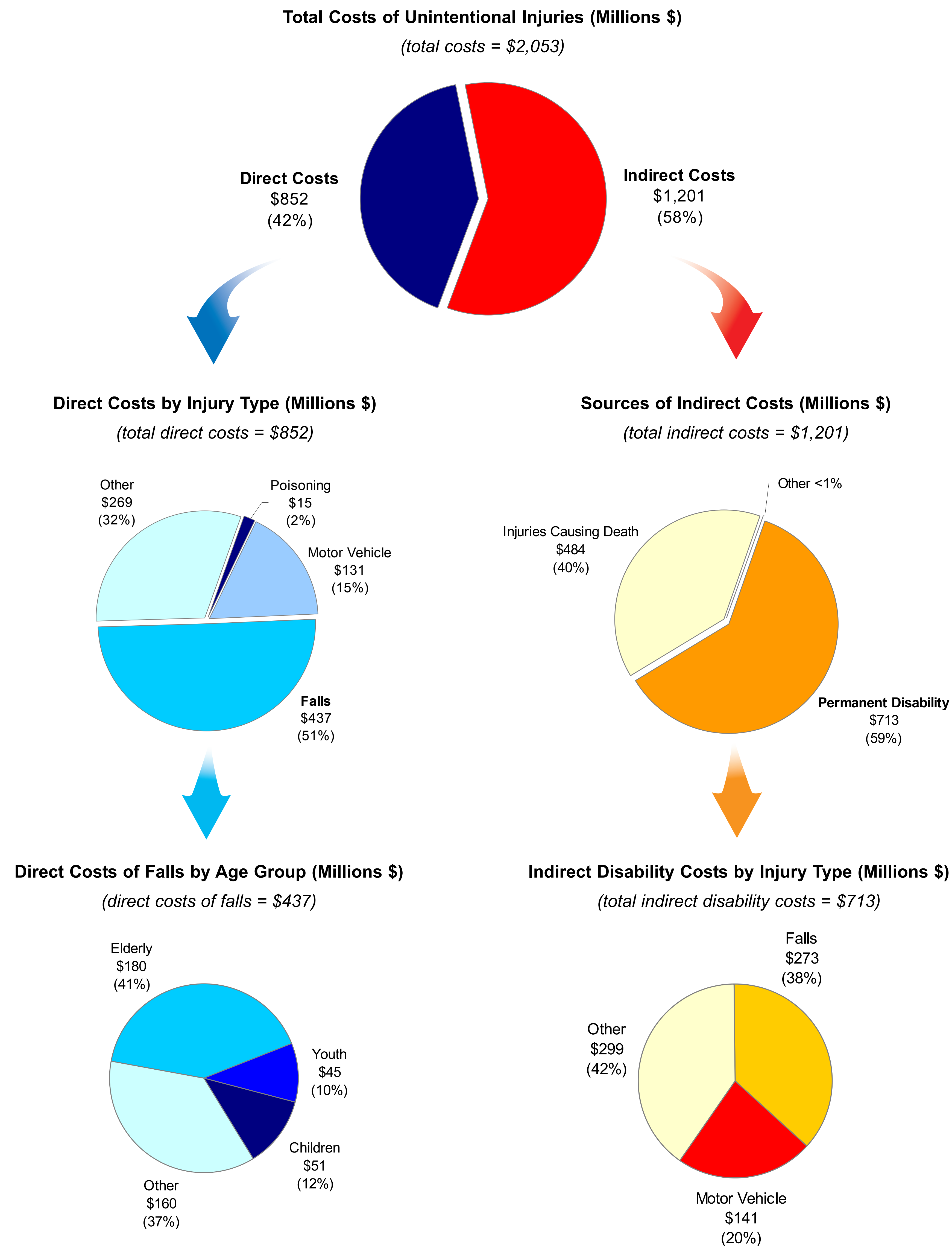
Consist of those injuries with no hospital costs in the initial treatment phase.

Indirect Costs

Restricted to productivity losses estimated using a human capital approach.

Calculated for premature death, duration of any hospital stay, and for any resulting permanent partial or permanent total disability.

RESULTS



Injury Reduction Scenarios

Scenario 1:

If the incidence of falls among the 0-24 years olds is reduced by 20 per cent, there would be:

- 263 fewer hospitalized cases
- 2500 fewer non-hospitalized cases
- 100 fewer injuries leading to permanent disability

The net savings could total over \$25 million every year.

Scenario 2:

With seat-belt use, driving sober, slowing down, there would be:

- 1,200 fewer hospitalizations
- 3,200 fewer non-hospitalized cases
- 287 fewer injuries leading to permanent disability

The net savings could amount to \$130 million annually.

Scenario 3:

With a 10 per cent reduction in crashes caused by poor road design and maintenance (based on the assumption that 20 per cent of those injured are hospitalized) there would be:

147 fewer deaths

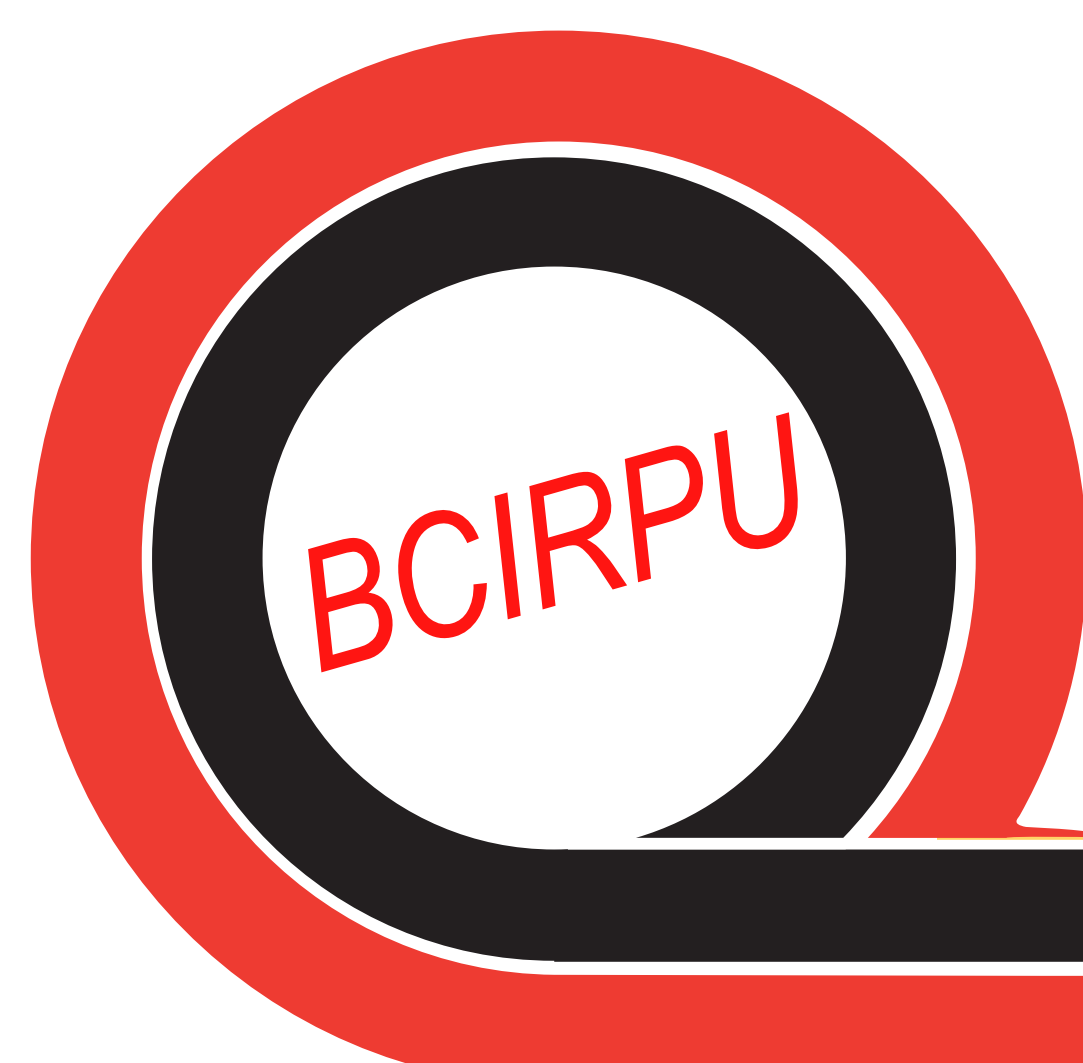
CONCLUSION

- Every hour of every day, 48 people in BC suffer an unintentional injury.
- Approximately 4 people in BC die daily from unintentional injury.
- Each year 400,000 residents of BC are injured.
- Of these, 10,000 are disabled.

Investment in a provincial injury strategy will lead to large payoffs for British Columbia.

Further information:

Economic Burden of Unintentionally Injury in British Columbia can be ordered from BCIRPU or downloaded for free from the BCIRPU website at www.injuryresearch.bc.ca.



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