

# Health hazards for seniors



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Environmental health is a significant component of overall health. All the other components of health i. e. social, cultural, economic, physical survival and wellbeing heavily rely on environmental health. Unfortunately, this dependence on land in present time result in suspected decline in the overall health status. Canadian government has recently accepted that some segment of our population i. e. elderly and disabled people is more exposed to high level of environmental hazards. As people become older, they become more susceptible to disease and disability and It is observed that this susceptibility will far more increase in overcrowded areas of the cities like shopping malls, clinics, hospitals, downtown, tourist places etc. However, much of the problems among older people can be reduced or prevented by adequately addressing specific risk factors, which includes:

Heavy traffic: Now a day's cities and towns heavily dependent on transport for the movement of people and goods which result in sharp growth of urban traffic so as with the terrace downtown also facing the heavy traffic problem. This heavy flow of traffic become huge problem for elderly and disable as elderly are now in the stage of age where they cannot properly do the safety check or move as fast as youngsters to cross the street, same as with the disable people that due to their physical disability they cannot move as quick as like other healthy people which result in large number of traffic accidents. The motor vehicle accidents increase the burden on health as many cases suffer end up in permanent or prolonged loss of productivity. According to World Bank studies, the main causes of urban traffic accidents are poor condition of vehicles, poor street conditions, sharing the same streets or

lanes, non-existent foot-paths and reckless road behavior without considering the high-risk group of the society. The heavy traffic also contributes to increase air and noise pollution which cause elderly who are already having weak immune system to suffer from acute and chronic respiratory diseases or hearing deficiency.

Solutions: The problems from heavy traffic can be minimize by changing the attitudes of drivers. Drivers should be caring towards this age group and try to stop their vehicle and wait until they saw elderly or disable safely cross the street. Road safety education should be reinforced from elementary school teaching so, that when these children start driving they abide by the traffic rules and regulations. In addition, public officials have the responsibility to act dutifully to enforce traffic legislation and perceived traffic accidents as a top priority and arrest the guilty on the spot regardless of the outcome. Crosswalks should be marked by high visibility ladder type markings. Moreover, to reduce the darkness which is also the major cause of accidents the city government should in placed more street lights. Pedestrians and elderly should also be encouraged to follow the traffic rules while crosswalk.

Cracks in Sidewalk: There are cracks present in sidewalks or pathways at most of the places in down town can also be the major problem for elderly and disabled. Irregular sidewalk sometime missed out by elderly due to their decrease ability of vision which then result in thousands of serious head, face, neck, and hand injury. When these injuries occurred to elderly it will take long time to recover and sometime it will be left unrecovered for their life time. Furthermore, it is also very difficult for disable people as they are

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using walkers and wheelchairs so, might possible that their wheelchairs or canes might get stuck in that cracks causing them to fall. These cracks can be found anywhere like in shopping centers, parking lots, hotels, grocery shops, gas station or restaurants in downtown. When people go to these places including elderly they are loaded with shopping carts, personal bags, attending phone calls, mothers holding their children's so, there is a chance that due to visual attraction their attention get diverted and they lose their balance thus, resulting in fall. These cracks sometime also be difficult to recognize if there is not adequate lighting, thus, making the danger even more difficult to perceive.

Solution:

The biggest prevention through which the problem can be addressed is to be extra careful from the surrounding while walking to prevent from fall. Try to walk slow and do not rush. Once dangers are discovered, then it is the responsibility of the government or property owner to repaired it as soon as possible or by the time place some warning to let the pedestrians know about it. In addition, City government should take immediate notice and send warning letters to property owners regarding sidewalk regulation if they observe any uneven pavement and if the property owner fail to timely repair that damage then city government should charge them ticket. Government and property owner should timely make sure that their sidewalks are safe and clear for pedestrians.

Hence, seniors are the biggest age group of our community and this population is more susceptible to environment hazards so, by proper

identification and by adapting environmental health policies we can address more seriously these future challenges.

#### REFERENCES

- Wilk, J. M., Newmaster, R., Sorrentino, A. S., & Remmert, L. (2012).  
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