

Research Digest



SOCIO-ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF THE ACCESS OPEN MINDS PROJECT IN NEW BRUNSWICK

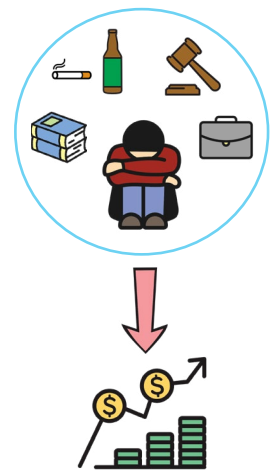


Summary of the following article

Dezetter, A., Beaton, A., & Bourque, J. (2020). Evaluation socioéconomique du Projet ACCESS Esprits ouverts – Analyses Préliminaires du volet T0 de l'Évaluation socioéconomique 2019 (Rapport final – Bourse MSSUSF 1260). Faculté des sciences de la santé et des services communautaires, Université de Moncton.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

Young New Brunswickers are affected by mental illness, as are all Canadians. One in five of them aged 15–25 are affected by a mental health problem or difficulty related to substance use, and more than a third of them will experience these difficulties in their lifetime. Some negative personal consequences of unaddressed mental health problems include dropping out of school, unemployment, homelessness, legal problems, and loss of life (suicidality). The effects of these problems on a young person's pathway in life can also carry a heavy economic burden, having both direct costs (i.e., the cost of consultations, hospitalizations, and medication) and indirect costs (i.e., the use of youth protection, police, and justice services; school absenteeism; suicide attempts and completed suicide). Some estimates put these combined costs at over \$51.6 billion per year across Canada.



ACCESS OPEN MINDS IN NEW BRUNSWICK

In the context of an international move towards providing integrated youth mental health (YMH) care, this article evaluates the economic impacts of the ACCESS Open Minds New Brunswick project. This YMH initiative was launched at three pilot sites across the province that represent the unique cultural and linguistic make-up of New Brunswick: Caraquet (Francophone), Saint John (Anglophone), and Elsipogtog First Nation (Indigenous). Each site team has moulded services to meet the needs of the youth in their community, such as mobile services across the expansive territory of the Acadian Peninsula, and culturally-specific programming for the Mi'kmaq youth of Elsipogtog.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY

Using this study, the authors sought to influence public health funding policy at the provincial and federal levels by evaluating the effectiveness of the ACCESS Open Minds intervention at these three sites. Among other research questions, they were asking:



What level of access do young people have to mental health services, and to the services of organizations geared towards serving the youth population?



What are the direct and indirect costs of mental health problems in this population?



What are the costs and benefits of ACCESS Open Minds New Brunswick program to this population?

CONSIDERATIONS

In order to make the argument that this YMH project is worth the cost, the authors considered the following:



Clinical and social portraits of the youth being served, and their access to services



An **estimate of the actual costs** of YMH, and the costs of operating each site per year, per youth

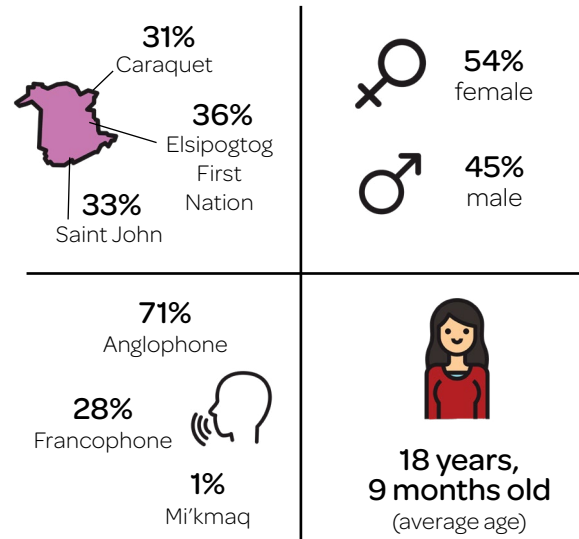


A **cost-benefit analysis** of the ACCESS Open Minds program, and an evaluation of the number of youth, across the province, who would benefit from receiving mental health services

METHOD

Seventy (70) youth were recruited from three sites in New Brunswick, and answered lengthy questionnaires.

General demographics



(See article for complete information on methodology)

RESULTS

Invest **\$1.00**



Save **\$1.40**



The investment in youth mental health services proves to be worthwhile from the first year, especially given that the economic evaluation method used was relatively conservative.

Average annual cost of caring for the mental health of one New Brunswicker aged 18-25



→ **\$10,397**

Includes direct and indirect costs

Cost of the ACCESS Open Minds New Brunswick program, per youth per year

→ **\$2,237**

More information can be found in this [presentation](#).