Self-harm and assault: A closer look at children and youth

Intentional injuries among children and youth in Canada*

In 2013–2014, approximately 17,500 hospitalizations among children and youth in Canada were for injuries. Approximately 3,000 of these hospitalizations were for an intentional injury—self-inflicted or caused by others.

New data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) focuses on children and youth who are hospitalized for self-harm or assault, revealing who is injured and how.

Key findings

Self-harm

Almost 2,500 youth (age 10 to 17) are hospitalized every year due to self-harm injuries.

- Girls account for more than 80% of these hospitalizations.
  - The number of girls hospitalized for self-harm by sharp objects, such as by “cutting” (making small cuts to the body, usually on the arms or legs) has increased 90% in the last 5 years.

Assault

More than 500 youth (younger than 18) are hospitalized every year because of an assault.

- While two-thirds of assault hospitalizations are for boys, the rate has decreased in the last 5 years. The rate for girls has increased.
  - Bodily force and other maltreatment such as abuse make up the majority of assault hospitalizations.

* Quebec data has been excluded from this analysis.