

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars/ l'Association canadienne des stagiaires post-doctoraux

New Survey Highlights the Challenges Facing the Next Generation of Canadian Scholars and Researchers

Nov. 21, 2016

Seventy-five percent of Canada's postdoctoral scholars have experienced symptoms that may indicate mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks, hopelessness and loneliness, according to a new survey from the Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars / l'Association canadienne des stagiaires post-doctoraux (CAPS-ACSP).

The state of mental health among postdocs working in Canada was particularly alarming to Dr. Nafisa Jadavji, lead author of the report and CAPS-ACSP Vice-Chair, External. "Support systems need to be put into place so that postdocs do not experience so much stress that it causes mental health issues." says Dr. Jadavji, as "The way things are currently is not healthy nor productive."

In addition, visa and work permit issues contribute to stress among international postdocs, who represent approximately 30% of current postdocs working in Canada. The survey showed that while the Canadian research environment is still highly respected internationally, more than half of international postdocs have experienced problems attaining visas and work permits. These issues may also contribute to a decline in the number of international postdocs working in Canada, as according to Dr. Jadavji, "Since 2009, we have observed a decrease in the number of international postdocs working in Canada. This is a loss for Canada as a country, in terms of attracting highly trained researchers to drive our knowledge-based economy."

Postdoctoral scholars (postdocs) are people who hold PhDs, MDs, or equivalent qualifications who primarily work as academic researchers while receiving advanced training traditionally intended to prepare them for university faculty positions. However, in today's job market 80% or more of these 'trainees' end up in non-faculty careers. Postdocs help form the backbone of Canada's research industry, working long hours, often in isolation, and with limited support. This new survey highlights many of the personal and professional challenges faced by postdocs in Canada.

The survey and report were funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Burroughs Wellcome Fund. The complete report is available at: <http://www.caps-acsp.ca/en/2016-canadian-national-postdoctoral-survey-results/>.

The Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars / l'Association canadienne des stagiaires post-doctoraux (CAPS-ACSP) is the national voice of Canadian postdoctoral scholars. CAPS-ACSP works towards clarifying the role of postdocs in Canada, advocates for equitable treatment of postdocs, and represents the interests of postdocs at Federal and Provincial levels. For more information, please visit <http://www.caps-acsp.ca>, or follow us [@capsacsp](https://twitter.com/capsacsp) on Twitter or Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/capsacsp>).

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