

On the Commute and In the Home: Safety Issues Facing NL Home Care Workers

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Introduction

- Home care workers
- Home as a site of long term care (Dyck, Kontos, Angus & McKeeever, 2005)
- Occupational Health and Safety literature of safety concerns of home care workers
- Skinner, Yantzi and Rosenberg (2009)

Purpose

- What are some safety issues identified by home care workers during the commute and in the home?

Outline

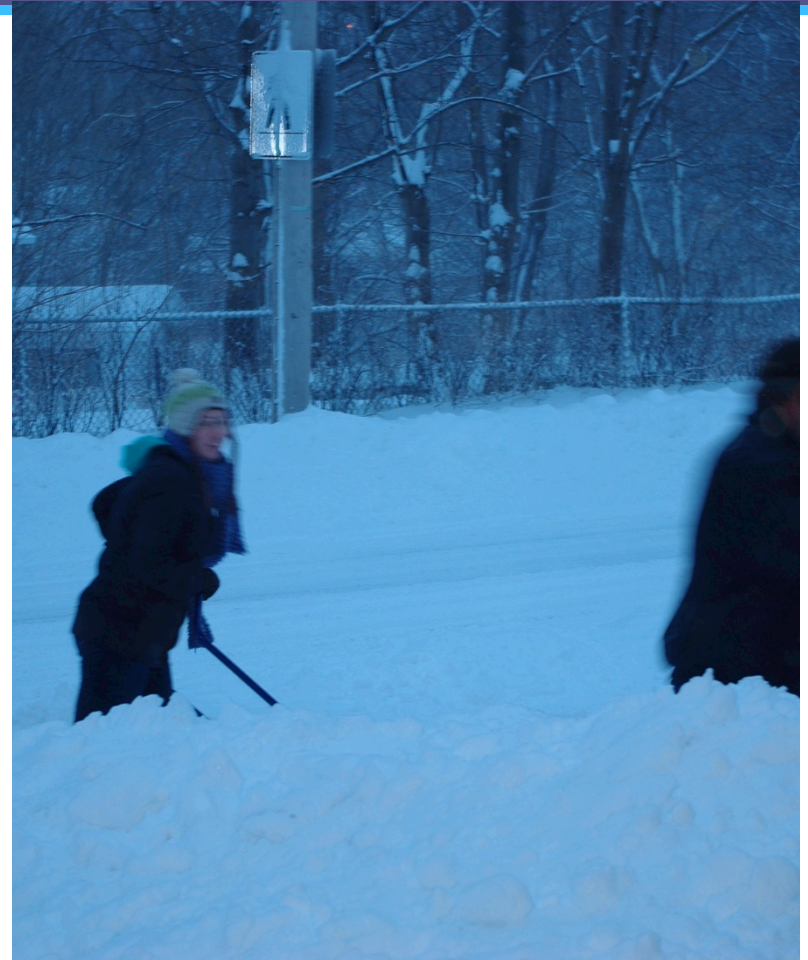
- Methods
- Preliminary findings
 - Safety concerns during the commute
 - Safety concerns in the home
- Policy recommendations

- Analyzed the CBC documentary *Where the Women Went* and extensive on-line comments on the documentary (http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/2008-2009/where_the_women_went/)
- Reviewed provincial home care policies and union contracts
- Interviewed
 - 35 home care workers
 - 10 home care agencies
 - 15 key informants
- Caveat – snowball sampling, not representative

On the commute

- Safety concerns
 - Driving in unsafe weather

I have driven in weather that I wouldn't have gone out in. Most shifts are cancelled if the weather is extreme - the only ones that aren't are total care. Amanda home care worker



Safety Concerns In the home

- Condition of the home
 - Needs repairs
 - Uncleanliness - hoarding

I was in a home one time the lady had newspapers and kept all of them. They were lined up all over the house and there were pathways like this [indicates the width to be about 2 feet]. I said, “Do you realize that if there was ever a fire there is no way you can get out of this house?” Amanda home care worker

Safety concerns in the home

- Exposure to mold in house
- Rats living in the house



http://www.tenantengineer.com/stach_backwall.jpg

Safety concerns in the home

- Musculoskeletal disorders
 - Arms, back, shoulders
 - Moving clients in beds, and transferring clients
 - Lifts?
 - Manual vs electronic

Safety concerns in the home

- Over 25% of home care workers experienced sexual harassment and/or physical violence by either the client or a family member
- Sexual harassment included both verbal and physical

Safety concerns in the home

Yes she would come at me with her fists, and she was a strong lady. She would make her own fence growing up and help build her house and she was very independent, right? So, she would accuse me of rusting up her pots and different things and she threatened me with an axe. Frieda, home care worker

Safety concerns in the home

- Karen and Samantha cared for an elderly man with dementia
 - Violent
 - “Like being in a prison”
 - Karen would phone husband for help
- Lil worked “for a client who was evil”
 - Client used her body and wheelchair to deliberately hurt Lil

Safety concerns in the home

- Mary - Drug use by family members
- Home care workers had insufficient knowledge about clients

Policy recommendations

- Perform risk assessment of client and home
- Pass information on to home care worker
- If violent client, schedule 2 home care workers

Acknowledgements



CIHR TEAM
in Gender,
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