Primary health care needs for transport truck drivers: development of a health survey through qualitative interviews

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Why Transport Truck Drivers?

• second most common Canadian occupation, behind retail salespeople, (1 in 35 adult men) (Minister of Industry 2006)

• occupation with highest WSIB lost-time injury (WSIB Ontario Annual Report 2006)

• USA data indicates unhealthy lifestyles including physical inactivity, poor diet and tobacco use noting 49% experienced obesity, 39% were overweight and 31% had high blood pressure (Apostolopoulos 2010, Saltzman 2003)

• no Canadian data on prevalence of risks to inform programs and strategies
Qualitative Starting Point

Objective:
To assess qualitatively the health and lifestyle issues affecting transport truck drivers in Canada to inform the development of a survey that will provide population-based data

Engagement:
Focus groups were held with two trucking companies in Hamilton, Ontario. Managers (n=9) and truck drivers (n=13) were interviewed using a guide developed from a literature search on chronic disease health risks and workplace health concerns
Methods

• Elicit range of issues of work, lifestyle, and relation to health
• Separate manager and driver focus groups from each company
• Semi-structured interview guide
• Groups audio-recorded and transcribed
• Conducted by members of research team
Analysis

Perspectives of drivers and managers on health and working conditions in the industry were captured during a guided discussion and transcribed.

Paired reviewers’ (BM, JJR) performed thematic analysis from transcripts of focus groups, independently and in duplicate, coming to consensus to:

1) create a code list
2) generate themes and sub-categories
## Results

| Stress                        | • Traffic and route  
|                              | • Truck driver interaction with industry, government, and public  
|                              | • Finances  
| Workplace & Communication    | • Training and regulations  
|                              | • Relationships with customer  
|                              | • Relationships with employer  
|                              | • Infrastructure and Environment  
| Lifestyle & Family Dynamic   | • Nutrition  
|                              | • Physical activity  
| Fatigue & Sleep              | • Work hours, scheduling  
|                              | • Sleep policy, regulations  
|                              | • Alertness, boredom  

Manager / Driver Perspectives

“if they’re allowed in the building they have to stay in a caged area. They’re allowed on the dock they have to stay in a confined space for safety reasons. Are they allowed to walk around the yard? Probably not.. they are confined.” (manager)

“… the regulations change over night in terms of the length of the flaps but they’re never notified but they get fined when they pull in.” (manager)

“parking is an issue so you can’t get proper food. You go to a truck stop you know,…and look at the menu. Everything ‘drips with grease’. (driver)

“… and if they do offer fresh fruit… it’s way over priced.” (driver)

“its just… it’s part of a lifestyle, old school lifestyle you know. Like you know, coffee, 10 cups of coffee, 2 packs of cigarettes, there OK I’m good for 500 miles.” (driver)
BEHIND THE GRILLE
CHEWING & CHANGING GEERS
TRUCK STOP MEALS, FAST FOODS & CONVENIENCE STORE SNACKS CAN ADD A LOAD OF SALT, FAT, SUGAR & CALORIES TO YOUR ROAD TRIP. CHOOSING WISELY OR PACKING YOUR OWN SNACKS & MEALS LETS YOU FUEL YOUR BODY WITH GOOD-FOR-YOU FOODS. AND IT SAVES MONEY TOO!

BEFORE YOU PACK
Always check before you cross the border as restrictions change. Check online at U.S. Customs and Border Protection or call your port of entry to see what foods can cross the border.

SKIP THE SUGARY SNACKS FOR YOUR TANK
The right snacks can keep your body energized. Want to hit your max road hours with energy to spare? Pack snacks with protein! Try:
- Unsalted almonds mixed with a handful of dried fruit (e.g., apricots, raisins) and a whole grain cereal like Post Shredded Wheat® or Kashi’s Einkorn Whole Wheat Cereal®.
- Unsalted, roasted chickpeas with a low sodium vegetable juice.
- Greek-style yogurt has at least double the protein as regular yogurt. Individual containers make a simple snack.
- Individual tins of tuna – just grab a fork, open and enjoy!
- Hummus with whole grain pita
- Whole grain crackers (e.g., Triscuits®) with thin pieces of cheddar cheese.

Cool Tip: A good cooler or mini fridge in your truck will keep food fresh and safe.

GRAB AND GO
No time to pack your snacks?
Here are some smart snacks from the truck stop store:
- Fresh fruit cups, veggies and salads
- Yogurt
- Yogurt drinks such as Danone Drinkable Activia®
- Baked Potato Chips
- Single servings of whole grain cereals such as Cheerios®
- Unsalted nuts and seeds
- Nut bars such as Larabar® or Kind® Fruit & Nut Bar
- Granola bars such as Kashi TLC® Chewy Granola Bars
- Cereal bars such as Kellogg’s Nutri-Grain® Bar
- Individual/single-serve packages of cheese or string cheese sticks

SEIZE THE DAY
Snacks are small. Even healthy snacks. Portion out snacks into small containers. Never eat out of the big bag. You’ll overeat and take in too many calories.
Progress / Next Steps

Progress:
Design Team: members from public health, research, insurance, workplace safety and prevention, family medicine, safety consulting, logistics
Knowledge Translation: WSIB, Institute for Work & Health
Name: Truckers Research for Innovative Health Promotion Programs (TRIHPP)
Website: www.transporthealth.ca
Fact Sheet: Tailored food fact sheet
Quantitative Survey of 822 Hamilton, Ontario area drivers based on domains identified (49.7% response rate):


Next Steps:
1. National quantitative survey of truck driver health to improve generalizability
2. Work towards interventional research
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Questions?

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