



RESILIENCE

*International Conference on
Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)*

Building accessibility together

MAY 2025

AN INITIATIVE OF:



Environmental Health Association of Canada-Association pour la santé environnementale du Canada
Environmental Health Association of Québec-Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec
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RESILIENCE: The International Conference on Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)

The conference organized by the Environmental Health Association of Canada and the Environmental Health Association of Québec will be held over two days on May 1 and May 2, 2025.

Conference Theme: Resilience

The conference theme, Resilience, highlights the need to advance scientific understanding, foster collaborative research, and drive systemic change for a safer global environment and improved quality of life for people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS).

Despite over 1.13 million Canadians reporting MCS in 2020 -,72% of whom are women (Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada), this medical condition, and recognized disability, continues to be met with inadequate healthcare resources and a lack of protection from chemical exposures in medical and other settings. The limited awareness among healthcare practitioners has hindered progress in diagnosis, treatment, and research, restricting education for future medical professionals. This conference seeks to bridge that gap by reinforcing the scientific legitimacy of MCS and advocating for policy changes to improve recognition and accessibility.

The two-day conference will explore MCS through distinct lenses:

Day 1: Scientific research on the biological mechanisms of MCS, including its etiology, physiology, metabolomics, and gene-environment interactions.

Day 2: Qualitative research, international perspectives, bias in scientific research, and discussions on human rights and disability inclusion.

By bringing together experts and researchers, the conference seeks to shape medical education, influence policy, and promote a deeper understanding of MCS.

Summary of Day 1: Biological Foundations of MCS

Day 1 will focus on the scientific legitimacy of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), by highlighting research on its biological mechanisms, symptoms, causes, and diagnostic



advancements. The day will open with remarks from the CEO of Accessibility Standards Canada, followed by discussions on the multi-system impacts of MCS, including neurological, immune, and respiratory effects.

Experts will explore environmental exposures—such as pollution and volatile organic compounds (VOCs)—as key triggers of MCS, supported by studies on animal models, genetic predisposition, and cellular-level effects. The role of mast cell activation as a potential mechanism will also be examined.

Finally, the conference will address diagnostic challenges, including limitations of current methods and emerging clinical biomarkers that could enhance recognition and treatment strategies for MCS. Through this evidence-based approach, the goal is to solidify MCS as a legitimate health condition and drive forward scientific and medical advancements.

Summary of Day 2: Societal, Legal, and Research Perspectives on MCS

Day 2 will focus on the prevalence, societal impact, and policy challenges surrounding Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). The day will begin with a video presentation analyzing MCS prevalence in Canada and internationally, incorporating statistical trends and insights from organizations in countries such as France, Japan, Italy, Spain, Germany, the UK, Australia and the USA, .

Discussions will highlight qualitative research, conducted in collaboration with national organizations like Accessibility Standards Canada, demonstrating the benefits of scent-free policies for public health. Doctors and researchers will share their perspectives on MCS prevalence, public attitudes, and barriers to recognition.

A key session will address legal inclusion, with representatives from the ARCH Disability Law Centre advocating for stronger protections for people with MCS in federal laws and regulations. Researchers will also examine bias in scientific research, exploring how skepticism towards MCS has contributed to stigma and limited support.

The day will conclude with a panel discussion featuring civil society, disability lawyers, advocacy leaders, and MCS experts, outlining next steps for research, policy, and awareness to drive meaningful change.



Conference Goals & Advocacy Vision

The conference aims to raise awareness of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) and promote equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Implementing scent-free policies is a simple yet impactful measure that can significantly improve air quality and quality of life while ensuring access for all.

This event marks an important step in a resilient advocacy movement for MCS. Nationally, efforts will focus on integrating scent/fragrance-free policies in federal buildings and emergency settings to eliminate barriers to essential services like healthcare and transportation. Internationally, the goal is to amplify the voices of those affected, drive research, and spark meaningful discussions to advance recognition and support for MCS.