



**COVID-19 IMMUNITY
TASK FORCE**

Spotlight on **CITF-FUNDED RESEARCH**



CITF Announcements

CITF Databank: individual-level data offers multiple research possibilities

The number of studies in the CITF Databank, which centralizes and harmonizes individual-level data from CITF-funded studies, is growing steadily. The individual-level data can support researchers in multiple ways such as estimating seroreversion and vaccine effectiveness, as well as linking exposure and symptomatic clinical profiles to levels of immune protection. Researchers from around the world may apply to access the data, cost-free, to support their own research work.

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CITF-Funded Research Results

COVID-19 vaccination is effective and not harmful during pregnancy according to a large Canadian study

A CITF-funded study, published in *Vaccine*, provides further reassurance that COVID-19 vaccination is effective and not harmful during pregnancy.

Researchers reported that people – whether pregnant or not - had similar side effects from COVID-19 vaccines. Consistent with other studies, those vaccinated during pregnancy did not experience higher rates of adverse pregnancy or infant outcomes.

[Read more](#)

Original COVID-19 mRNA vaccines sustain stronger immune responses against wildtype than Omicron strains, despite Omicron breakthrough infection

A CITF-funded study, published in *Vaccines*, showed that vaccination with an original COVID-19 mRNA vaccine induces a stronger circulating IgA immune response to the wildtype SARS-CoV-2 strain than to the Omicron strains.

Participants vaccinated three or four times had significantly stronger anti-full-length spike (FLS) IgA responses against wildtype than against Omicron BA.1. The levels of IgA responses remained higher against the wildtype FLS, even after an Omicron breakthrough infection following two or three vaccine doses.

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Perceived risk of getting COVID-19 is associated with poorer mental health outcomes in British Columbia school staff

A CITF-funded study, published in the *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports*, found that school staff who felt they were at higher risk of getting COVID-19 reported higher anxiety symptoms. Female school staff who perceived they had a higher risk of getting COVID-19 experienced higher levels of psychological distress and had lower levels of optimism.

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Seroprevalence remained high in Montreal children and adolescents in June 2023

The latest results from the CITF-funded EnCORE study looking at seroprevalence among children and adolescents in Montreal found that 79.4% of children and teens had infection-acquired antibodies between February and June 2023. Overall, 13% of the cohort had received a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result between September 2022 and June 2023. The results, in a report to participants and their parents, are preliminary and have not been peer reviewed.

[Read more](#)

Using social media as a source of COVID-19 vaccine information associated with lower rates of vaccine uptake in people who use drugs

A CITF-funded study, published in *Scientific Reports*, found that only 48% of people who use drugs (PWUD) had received at least two SARS-CoV-2 vaccine doses at baseline in September 2021, much lower than in the general population (70%) in British Columbia at that time. Among PWUD, those using social media as a source of vaccine information were less likely to be vaccinated with a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine.

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Despite loneliness, gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men were less likely to engage in sexual risk-taking in the first year of COVID-19

A CITF-funded study, published in *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, found that gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBM) likely adapted their sexual activity in line with COVID-19 concerns/public health guidelines. In effect, despite increased feelings of loneliness, many GBM

restricted the number of new sexual partners and were less likely to engage in sexual risk-taking during the first year of COVID-19.

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Vaccine passports are meant to protect the unvaccinated population

A CITF-funded study, published by the C.D. Howe Institute, underscored that vaccine passports are aimed at protecting unvaccinated people or people who cannot be vaccinated from the risk of serious illness from COVID-19. The authors found that they are not intended to exclude people based on stereotypes, or discount the interests of groups based on race, national or ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. Their primary protective benefit, they argued, is not for the vaccinated population, which faces a much lower risk of serious illness.

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From Preprint to Publication

Third and fourth doses of monovalent and bivalent COVID-19 vaccines provide similar, strong protection against severe COVID-19 outcomes in those 50+

A CITF-funded study, published in *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, reported that third and fourth doses of monovalent and bivalent mRNA vaccines provided similar strong protection against severe outcomes from COVID-19 among community-dwelling adults over the age of 50. However, further follow-up is needed to determine the long-term protection of bivalent vaccines and their effectiveness against newer Omicron variants.

[Read more](#)

New vaccines in development, including a trivalent vaccine, trigger strong immune responses against all SARS-CoV-2 variants in animal models

A CITF-funded study, published in *iScience*, developed four spike-based vaccines against the SARS-CoV-2 virus and measured antibody and cellular responses. All four – one based on the wildtype (original strain), one based on Beta, one based on Delta, and a trivalent vaccine combining all three – produced a strong neutralizing antibody response in an animal model against all SARS-CoV-2 variants, including against the Omicron variant.

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