



**COVID-19 IMMUNITY
TASK FORCE**

Spotlight on **CITF-FUNDED RESEARCH**



CITF Announcements

Infection-acquired seroprevalence in Canada up 4% between September and November

Our Seroprevalence in Canada page has just been updated with the latest results from nearly two dozen studies which show infection-acquired seroprevalence in Canada increased by the end of November, rising to 83% compared to 79% at the end of September, with infants and young adults having higher seropositivity than other age groups.

[Read more](#)

CITF Databank: interactive features allow customized search on data for over 100,000 participants

Our CITF Databank now has interactive tools for researchers wanting data on SARS-CoV-2. A total of 17 studies have been harmonized so far with individual-level data from 100,000+ participants. The interactive dashboard includes dozens of demographic and health variables represented in the CITF Databank, and features a powerful interface for researchers to ask a specific research question based on their study selection criteria, and

determine if the harmonized data sets can support their work. Access is cost-free and available to researchers everywhere.

[Read more](#)



CITF-Funded Research Results

Seroprevalence due to infection continued to rise, albeit slightly, in Canadian blood donors in November

The latest CITF-funded report from Canadian Blood Services suggests that seroprevalence due to infection was 83% in November 2023, up slightly from 81.6% in October 2023. This increase was not statistically significant. Consistent with previous reports, the percentage of younger donors (ages 17-24) who had infection-acquired SARS-CoV-2 antibodies was 92.5% by November 30th, 2023, slightly higher than the 91.8% observed in October 2023. Self-declared black, Indigenous, and racialized donors continued to have higher seroprevalence due to infection compared to self-declared white donors.

[Read more](#)

Infants, young adults, and South Asian participants experienced comparatively higher SARS-CoV-2 seroprevalence

A CITF-funded study, published in *BMC Infectious Diseases*, aimed to determine age-specific population SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity and identify risk factors for infection among unvaccinated children and young adults. The researchers found that SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity was highest among infants and children under five years old and young adults, compared to school-aged children. Overall, South Asian participants had higher

seropositivity than other ethnicities.

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Clear communication from regulatory bodies is vital for dentists to be able to safeguard themselves, their patients, and the community during pandemics

A CITF-supported study, published in *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, highlighted the negative views held by Canadian dentists of the COVID-19 communications about health risks and guidelines issued by their regulatory bodies. Study participants expressed feeling confused and overwhelmed by delayed, vague, lengthy, unclear guidelines that were difficult to follow and understand. This feedback can help guide regulatory bodies in providing clear, timely, and practical guidelines to better equip dentists to protect themselves, their patients, and the general population during current and future pandemics.

[Read more](#)

Wastewater-based surveillance technology is likely to be a key tool for community-level pathogen surveillance post-pandemic

A CITF-funded study, published in *Clinical Microbiology Reviews*, provides a thorough overview of the usefulness of wastewater-based surveillance (WBS), during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This state-of-the-art review addresses the heterogeneity of information currently present in the SARS-CoV-2 literature on WBS. The authors conclude that WBS technology is a key tool that can provide valuable insights in studying infectious diseases and informing public health policies.

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Community-centered research requires trust, cultural appropriateness, and in-depth

engagement with participants

A CITF-supported study, published in *Health Promotion Practice*, presents field notes to provide insights into culturally responsive, trust-centered, and communication-focused strategies that could be used to improve research conducted during a respiratory pathogen pandemic. Recommendations include establishing trust and building a connection with participants to maintain a virtual relationship, developing responsive and proactive study recruitment approaches, and working within public health guidelines to create opportunities for engaging sub-communities of South Asian populations in Ontario and British Columbia.

[Read more](#)

Adaptive platform trials are needed for more informed policy decisions on antiviral therapies

A research commentary by a CITF-funded researcher published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* discusses how study populations enrolled in research on oral antivirals (e.g., nirmatrelvir-ritonavir, molnupiravir) are not representative of current COVID-19 patients. The authors argue that this key shortcoming means these therapies, aimed at reducing death and hospitalizations, are less effective in real-world settings. They suggest adaptive platform trials could serve to overcome this shortcoming.

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Stop the Spread Ottawa investigates the longevity and robustness of SARS-CoV-2 immune responses to infection and vaccination

A CITF-funded study's cohort profile was published in *BMJ Open*, describing its study design, participant baseline characteristics, and ongoing data collection aimed at contributing data on effective SARS-CoV-2 immune responses conferred by infection and/or vaccination. The researchers highlight the need for longitudinal analyses of SARS-CoV-2 immune responses within diverse populations in response to ongoing vaccinations and emerging variants of concern (VoC).

[Read more](#)

There are four fundamental choices for the design of vaccine passport systems

A commentary by a CITF-funded researcher, published by the *C.D. Howe Institute*, highlights four fundamental choices for the design of vaccine passport systems that bear upon potential privacy considerations for Canadians. These four choices relate to the information encoded in the passport, the information collected by the organization issuing the passport, the organization(s) permitted to issue the passport, and technological implementation of the passports (digital or analog).

[Read more](#)



From Preprint to Publication

Healthcare workers had higher incidences of SARS-CoV-2 infection and mental distress compared to the general population

A CITF-funded study, published in the *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, found that healthcare workers (HCWs) in Alberta had a higher incidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection and of mental health distress compared to community members seen in physician consultations. They were matched by gender, age, and geographic location. Excess infection among healthcare workers was most notable early in the pandemic and during the fifth (Omicron) wave. Based on administrative health data, the excess incidence of mental health conditions, including stress/adjustment reaction or depressive disorder, was seen with each wave of the pandemic, increasing to a peak in the fourth wave in Alberta.

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