



**COVID-19 IMMUNITY  
TASK FORCE**

# Research Roundup

Your weekly review on COVID-related research



## Spotlight on CITF-funded Research

### **Most Montreal parents willing to vaccinate their children, but vaccine hesitancy more prominent among visible minorities**

Health Canada approved the use of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine on children 12 and older on May 5, 2021. As part of her CITF-funded research, Dr. Kate Zinszer, from Université de Montréal, and her colleagues examined willingness to vaccinate children according to level of education, neighbourhood, and visible minority status within a cohort of parents in Montreal. In a preprint, therefore not yet peer-reviewed, most of the parents surveyed (86%) responded that they were likely to have their child vaccinated against COVID-19, but the numbers are less among visible minorities.

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## Explore the latest seroprevalence results in Canada via SeroTracker

SeroTracker is an online tool that tracks and visualizes global COVID-19 serology testing data – testing that examines blood samples for antibodies that indicate a person has been exposed to the novel coronavirus. SeroTracker was initiated in early April 2020 to serve the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force’s need for global serological testing data as well as creating a dashboard focused on Canadian seroprevalence studies. To date, the Canadian dashboard includes 14 studies carried out across the country, each with varying estimates of how far we are from herd immunity.

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## Publications from our Experts

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## Comparison of serological assays used across the globe

CITF-funded scientists from Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec participated in an international study which looked to compare the different serological assays used across 27 countries to estimate seroprevalence. The results were recently published in *Vox Sanguinis*, highlighting the diversity of assays used, with the Abbott SARS-CoV-2 Ig assay being the most common.

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## A tale of two tests: Implications for outbreak management and infection control policies

In a recent publication in the *American Journal of Infection Control*, CITF Leadership Group member Dr. Mel Krajden and colleagues in British Columbia conducted a serological survey of long-term care (LTC) residents and staff following outbreaks at two facilities. The authors found that people who had previously tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 by RT-PCR (nasal swab) later tested positive for antibodies via a blood sample, showing that more people may have been infected than previously thought. These findings are important as they can inform rapid yet effective COVID-19 responses in LTC facilities.

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## International Research Review

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### Should you get the COVID-19 vaccine if you lack the cells that make antibodies?

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disorder that is often treated with drugs that deplete B cells and therefore interfere in the process of antibody

production. Indeed, MS patients being treated with certain medications have no detectable antibody response after two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. While these vaccines have been proven safe for these patients, a study in *Therapeutic Advances in Neurological Disorders* suggests the overall protection they confer requires further evaluation. It is important to keep these patients in the current vaccination priority group, but with a more rigorous follow up.

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### Added benefit: A single dose of COVID-19 vaccine can also protect your loved ones at home

Researchers from Public Health England followed COVID-19 vaccine recipients nationwide to measure their risk of infection and transmission. In a preprint, therefore not yet peer reviewed, they suggest that household transmission was cut by 40-50% if the person had received one dose of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or AstraZeneca vaccine before testing positive. Meantime, a study in the U.S. suggests a significant gain in protection with two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

## Read Summary

### Beating the pandemic blues





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