



COVID-19 IMMUNITY  
TASK FORCE

# Research Roundup

Your weekly review on COVID-related research



## CITF Event

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### Save the Date!

Mark **September 29th, 2021, from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. ET** in your calendars! The COVID-19 Immunity Task Force is launching a new monthly series with CanCOVID. First topic: Risks and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Canada's kids, parents, and teachers: Latest CITF-funded research results and policy implications. More to come in our next issue!



## Spotlight on CITF-funded Research

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**Latest Canadian Blood Services data show improvements in vaccine uptake and equity in vaccine coverage**

The month of June saw many Canadians rolling up their sleeves for a COVID-19 vaccine. The latest results from the Canadian Blood Services' serosurvey reflect this, with vaccine-induced seroprevalence soaring to 86% across Canada (excluding the Territories and Quebec), up from 60% the month prior. Most importantly, the gap in vaccine coverage among socioeconomic groups has narrowed considerably compared to previous months. And while the rate of infection-acquired seroprevalence remained low in June, a persistent increased risk is seen among youth 17-24 years old, racialized communities, and individuals living in lower-income neighbourhoods.

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## **Careful vigilance of population immunity, booster vaccines, masks, and social distancing required to fend off a new COVID wave**

A study out in preprint in August (and therefore not yet peer-reviewed) led by CITF Scientific Advisor Dr. Jane Heffernan and which included CITF Scientific Lead, Data Management & Analysis, Dr. David Buckeridge, modelled immunity to COVID-19 across Canada. The scientists used a mathematical model to determine the distribution of immunity in the Canadian population and showed that the current level of immunity may not be sufficient to prevent a new COVID-19 wave. Their immunity modelling predictions go until March 2022. The authors suggested that booster vaccines may be needed and emphasized the continuous need for non-pharmaceutical interventions (such as use of masks and social distancing).

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## **Intention to vaccinate among participants of a national study**

In a recent article published in *The Lancet Regional Health – Americas*, CITF-funded researcher Dr. Prabhat Jha and his Action to beat Coronavirus (Ab-C Study) team estimated 9% of Canadians would refuse a COVID-19 vaccine and the authors identified key populations to work with to improve vaccine acceptance.

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## Publications from our Experts

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### **Mental illness and substance use also linked to increased risk of hospitalization**

In a preprint that has not been peer-reviewed, CITF Leadership Group member Dr. Mel Krajden and colleagues sought to identify factors associated with COVID-19 hospitalization by looking at all individuals with lab-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 in British Columbia as of January 15, 2021. Of all factors identified, this is one of the first reports linking mental illness and substance use with increased risk of COVID-19-related hospitalization. The authors suggest that prioritizing individuals and groups with the identified risk factors could reduce serious COVID-19 outcomes.

[Read Summary](#)



## International Research Review

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### **Delta doubles risk of hospitalization compared to Alpha, study finds**

New research out of England published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* suggests that hospitalization and visits to the emergency department are twice as likely with the variant of concern Delta compared to the Alpha

variant. These findings come at a time when Delta is surging worldwide, forewarning its significant strain on healthcare systems.

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## Outcomes of COVID-19 in children and adolescents with cancer

Previous studies have shown that children with COVID-19 generally have a milder disease course compared to adults. However, children with cancer have a higher risk of severe disease due to infection with other respiratory viruses, suggesting they may also be at higher risk for COVID-19 complications. A recent multi-national study, published in *Lancet Oncology*, indicated that 20% of children and adolescents with cancer who contracted SARS-CoV-2 had severe or critical COVID-19. The authors have created the Global Registry of COVID-19 in Childhood Cancer to capture relevant data.

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