

WERE RECENT CASES OF COVID 19 SIGNIFICANTLY  
UNDERESTIMATED? MANY CANADIANS FELT THEY  
GOT COVID BUT DID NOT GET A TEST?

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# INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Over the month of December, the highly infectious Omicron variant overwhelmed much of the testing capacity across the country making it difficult to get an accurate idea of just how many people got the contagion. McMaster Professor Dominik Mertz, an infectious diseases physician observed that “we aren't able to test the majority of people anymore who are symptomatic” In effect the question about the numbers of Omicron cases in Canada is not whether there was an underestimate but rather by how much. To get a better approximation of that number Canadians were asked whether they got Covid 19 over the past 60 days (prior to the survey which was conducted January 7-9, 2022. It revealed that the number that believed that they were positive (but not confirmed with a test) was nearly the same as the number that said they were confirmed with a positive test thus implying that the numbers of reported cases over that sixty day period might be as much as double what was reported. That said about 80% who ended up getting a test did not have Covid. Nonetheless the country was left with a great deal more that may have contracted the virus than the testing revealed and likely more so than at any previous point in the evolution of the contagion. The survey reveals that some three quarters of the untested that believe they had Covid are of the opinion that in the case of Omicron its effects on one's health are less severe than were previous strains of Covid, a view shared by two thirds of Canadians that tested positive.

The findings arise from surveys conducted via web panel by Leger in partnership with the Association for Canadian Studies between January 7 and 9 with some 1547 Canadians and while no margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample for comparative purposes the national sample would have a margin of error of  $\pm 2.5\%$ , 19 times out of 20

# IN ONTARIO THERE WERE MORE PEOPLE THAT REPORT BEING POSITIVE BUT UNTESTED THAN THERE ARE CONFIRMED POSITIVES

Have you or someone in your household had COVID-19 in the past 60 days?							
	British Columbia	Alberta	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Maritimes	Canada
Yes, and this was officially confirmed at a public health or private testing site	3.3%	7.4%	5.9%	5.9%	7.5%	4.8%	6.0%
We think so, but it was not officially confirmed at a public health or private testing site	2.4%	4.6%	2.0%	7.7%	7.2%	3.8%	5.9%
Both of the above (i.e. some members of our household got tested and officially confirmed they had COVID-19, while other	1.9%	1.1%		0.8%	1.7%		1.1%
No, not as far as we know	92.4%	86.9%	92.1%	85.5%	83.7%	91.4%	87.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

# THE 35-44 AGE COHORT SAW MORE UNTESTED POSITIVES THAN CONFIRMED POSITIVES

	Have you or someone in your household had COVID-19 in the past 60 days?						Canada
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	
Yes, and this was officially confirmed at a public health or private testing site	10.8%	9.5%	7.2%	5.8%	3.0%	4.0%	6.0%
We think so, but it was not officially confirmed at a public health or private testing site	6.0%	8.2%	9.8%	5.1%	4.1%	4.0%	5.9%
Both of the above (i.e. some members of our household got tested and officially confirmed they had COVID-19, while other	0.6%	0.4%	0.8%	2.5%	0.7%	1.6%	1.1%
No, not as far as we know	82.5%	81.9%	82.3%	86.6%	92.2%	90.3%	87.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

# UNVACCINATED FAR MORE LIKELY THAN OTHERS TO FEEL THEY HAD COVID OVER THE PAST SIXTY DAYS BUT DID NOT GET CONFIRMED TEST

Have you or someone in your household had COVID-19 in the past 60 days?	What is your vaccination status?			Total
	Two doses and a booster shot	Two doses	Not vaccinated	
Yes, and this was officially confirmed at a public health or private testing site	4.1%	8.2%	4.1%	6.0%
We think so, but it was not officially confirmed at a public health or private testing site	5.4%	6.1%	11.3%	5.9%
Both of the above (i.e. some members of our household got tested and officially confirmed they had COVID-19, while other	0.3%	1.7%	2.1%	1.0%
No, not as far as we know	90.3%	84.0%	82.5%	87.1%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

NEARLY THREE IN FOUR THAT REPORT UNTESTED BUT BELIEVE THEY HAVE COVID FEEL THE STRAIN IS LESS SEVERE, A VIEW SHARED BY TWO THIRDS OF THOSE WITH CONFIRMED TESTS

Compared to previous strains of the COVID-19/Coronavirus, do you think the effects on someone's health from Omicron are:	Have you or someone in your household had COVID-19 in the past 60 days?		Total
	Yes, and this was officially confirmed at a public health or private testing site	We think so, but it was not officially confirmed at a public health or private testing site	
More severe	21.3%	9.8%	7.7%
Less severe	66.0%	72.8%	64.3%
About the same	8.5%	12.0%	16.8%
I don't know	4.3%	5.4%	11.2%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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