

COVID-19 is seen as Canada's most urgent health problem by the largest plurality of Canadians, however there is a vast disagreement in opinion between vaccinated and non-vaccinated in this regard; Quebecers least likely in Canada to regard Covid 19 as most urgent health problem

Jack Jedwab

President and CEO

Association for Canadian Studies and Metropolis Institute

March 2022

A recent report from Statistics Canada (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220124/dq220124a-eng.htm>) reveals that in 2020 the pandemic had a significant impact on mortality in Canada, contributing to the largest annual decline in life expectancy since the vital statistics registration system was introduced in 1921. COVID-19 became the third leading cause of death (5.3) behind cancer (26.4%) and heart disease (17.5%).

Throughout the pandemic, provincial health systems became critically overwhelmed by levels of hospitalization owing in large part to the number of Covid cases in an already fragile system.

With what urgency do Canadians view Covid 19 compared to other illnesses that traditionally challenge our health system. The Association for Canadian Studies commissioned Leger Marketing to put the question to Canadians and found that the answer varied in part by demographics but the biggest gap was between vaccinated and unvaccinated Canadians. Most Canadians ranked Covid 19 as the country's most urgent health problem followed by Cancer and Mental Health. But two in three unvaccinated Canadians ranked Covid 19 as the least urgent health problem when ranked against the six on the list. On a regional basis, Quebecers were least likely in Canada to see Covid 19 as the country's most urgent health problem

The findings arise from surveys conducted via web panel by Leger in partnership with the Association for Canadian Studies between February 4 and 6, 2022 with 1547 Canadians. While no margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample for comparative purposes the national sample of 1547 Canadians would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

**Introduction:
Quebecers were
the least likely in
Canada to see
Covid 19 as the
country's most
urgent health
problem**

Quebecers are far more likely to view Cancer as the country's most urgent health problem compared with other Canadians who rank COVID-19 at the top

Rank in order which of the following you think is the country's most urgent health problem

	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba /Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia
Covid 19	39%	27%	37%	45%	41%	46%
Cancer	30%	44%	29%	24%	26%	27%
Mental Health	19%	19%	21%	21%	22%	17%
Heart Disease	6%	7%	5%	2%	6%	3%
Obesity	6%	4%	5%	6%	3%	5%
Diabetes	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%

Most Canadians think that COVID-19 is the country's most urgent health problem, but there is a massive gap in opinion between the fully vaccinated/boosted and the unvaccinated as to which health problems are most urgent. Notably, those Canadians with two vaccine doses placed Cancer ahead of COVID-19 as the number one health problem in Canada

Rank in order which of the following you think is the country's most urgent health problem

What is your vaccination status?	Total	Two doses and a booster shot	Two doses	Not vaccinated
Covid 19	37.0%	44.6%	27.4%	7.4%
Cancer	31.5%	29.3%	35.5%	42.1%
Mental Health	19.8%	15.9%	25.6%	28.1%
Heart Disease	5.2%	4.7%	4.4%	10.6%
Obesity	4.9%	3.9%	5.4%	11.6%
Diabetes	1.6%	1.7%	1.5%	1.1%

Over two thirds of unvaccinated Canadians regard COVID-19 as the country's least important health problem amongst the six listed in our study

Rank in order which of the following you think is the country's most urgent health problem

Covid 19	Total	Two doses and a booster	Two Doses	Not vaccinated
1st	37%	45%	28%	7%
2nd	14%	15%	17%	3%
3rd	11%	12%	12%	3%
4th	8%	10%	6%	7%
5th	9%	8%	8%	12%
6th	20%	10%	29%	68%

Canadians aged under 25 and over 45 regard COVID-19 as Canada's most urgent health care problem, while for those aged 25-34 it is mental health and for 35-44 it is Cancer

Rank in order which of the following you think is the country's most urgent health problem

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +
Covid 19	43%	28%	26%	36%	44%	44%
Cancer	32%	28%	31%	30%	34%	34%
Mental Health	20%	30%	21%	10%	10%	26%
Heart Disease	2%	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%
Obesity	2%	7%	6%	7%	4%	3%
Diabetes	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	3%

One in five Canadians believe that a majority of the population contracted Covid 19. Albertans are most likely to think that over one third of Canadians contracted the virus

What is the percentage of Canadians that you think have had COVID-19?	Total	British Columbia	Alberta	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Maritimes
Less than 20 percent	17.9%	18.7%	18.3%	11.0%	18.9%	13.0%	34.0%
Between 20 and 35 percent	27.5%	28.7%	21.7%	26.0%	26.3%	34.9%	17.0%
Between 35 and 50 percent	24.2%	19.6%	32.6%	27.0%	23.4%	24.1%	20.8%
Over 50 percent	21.1%	20.6%	20.0%	23.0%	21.4%	22.2%	17.0%
I don't know	9.3%	12.4%	7.4%	13.0%	9.9%	5.8%	11.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Unvaccinated Canadians were most likely to believe that a majority of Canadians got Covid 19

What is the percentage of Canadians that you think have had COVID-19?	Two doses and a booster shot	Two doses	One dose	Not vaccinated
Less than 20 percent	18.2%	16.2%	6.7%	25.5%
Between 20 and 35 percent	29.4%	26.7%	26.7%	20.2%
Between 35 and 50 percent	25.4%	24.6%	33.3%	12.8%
Over 50 percent	18.9%	23.6%	20.0%	28.7%
I don't know	8.1%	9.0%	13.3%	12.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

People that tested positive for Covid 19 were far more likely to think that a majority of people got the contagion

What is the percentage of Canadians that you think have had COVID-19?	Tested positively or not, did you get COVID-19 in the last two years	Did not test positive
Less than 20 percent	12.0%	19.6%
Between 20 and 35 percent	24.7%	28.4%
Between 35 and 50 percent	25.8%	24.0%
Over 50 percent	33.0%	18.2%
I don't know	4.5%	9.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Women were more likely than men to report severe symptoms from Covid 19

How would you rate the severity of the symptoms for yourself personally	Total	Male	Female
I did not have any symptoms	19.9%	18.6%	21.1%
I had mild symptoms	49.3%	51.7%	46.9%
I had severe symptoms, but it didn't stop me from doing my daily tasks/activities	17.1%	18.6%	15.6%
I had severe symptoms, and I had to stay in bed	12.7%	9.7%	15.6%
I was hospitalized	1.0%	1.4%	0.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Visible minorities were more likely than NVM to report severe symptoms from Covid 19

How would you rate the severity of the symptoms for yourself personally	Visible Minority	Not a Visible Minority
I did not have any symptoms	19.6%	20.7%
I had mild symptoms	28.3%	53.4%
I had severe symptoms, but it didn't stop me from doing my daily tasks/activities	26.1%	14.7%
I had severe symptoms, and I had to stay in bed	21.7%	10.8%
I was hospitalized	4.3%	0.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Persons with Children under 18 were far more likely to report severe symptoms from Covid than those without children

How would you rate the severity of the symptoms for yourself personally	With children under 18	Without Children
I did not have any symptoms	7.4%	29.2%
I had mild symptoms	50.0%	48.8%
I had severe symptoms, but it didn't stop me from doing my daily tasks/activities	25.4%	11.9%
I had severe symptoms, and I had to stay in bed	15.6%	9.5%
I was hospitalized	1.6%	0.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

One in three Canadians felt that getting vaccinated against Covid 19 was a personal choice with Albertans most likely to hold that view and British Columbians least likely to concur

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is...	Canada	British Columbia	Alberta	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Maritimes
Personal Choice	32.9%	25.4%	45.1%	38.0%	32.7%	30.9%	31.1%
Everyone's Responsibility	64.4%	69.9%	53.8%	59.0%	64.6%	67.2%	66.0%
I don't know	2.7%	4.8%	1.2%	3.0%	2.7%	1.9%	2.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

© 2022 Association for Canadian Studies

All Rights Reserved.

March 2022

