



Mapping COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in Canada to support effective communication: Findings from the iCARE study

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www.iCAREstudy.com





Introduction

- The success of the COVID-19 vaccination endeavour is contingent upon population willingness to receive the vaccines
- As of April 13, 2021, about 5,7 million Canadians (\approx 15% of Canadian population) received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine
- There is still a long journey ahead to achieve at least 60-80% vaccination rates to attain herd immunity



Objective:

- *This multi-wave cross-sectional study explored levels and socio-demographic determinants of COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy in Canada.*





Methods

- **Data:** Canadian portion of the iCARE global study (www.icarestudy.com)
- **Recruitment:** Convenience sampling methodology
- **Time frame:** March, 2020 - January, 2021 (surveys 1 to 7).
- **Outcome of interest:**
 - COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy was assessed using the question *“If a vaccine for COVID-19 were available today, what is the likelihood that you would get vaccinated?”*
 - ‘Extremely likely’ compared to ‘Somewhat likely, Unlikely, Very unlikely’
- **Statistical analysis:** descriptive statistical analyses (proportions, frequencies, changes over time and differences based on socio-demographic and health variables)

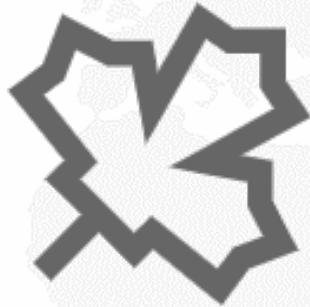




Sample description (N=16,673)*

Age distribution:

- Less than 29 years 19%
- 30-69 years 71%
- 70 years or more 10%



Education:



- High school/lower 23%
- Graduate/Postgraduate 77%

Sex:



Male 25%
Female 75%

Living area:



Urban
57%



Suburban
33%



Rural
11%

Perceived income:

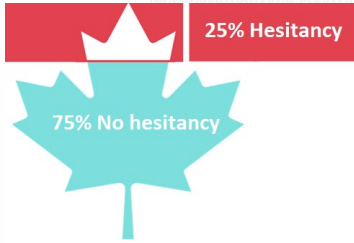


- Top third 34%
- Middle third 51%
- Bottom third 15%

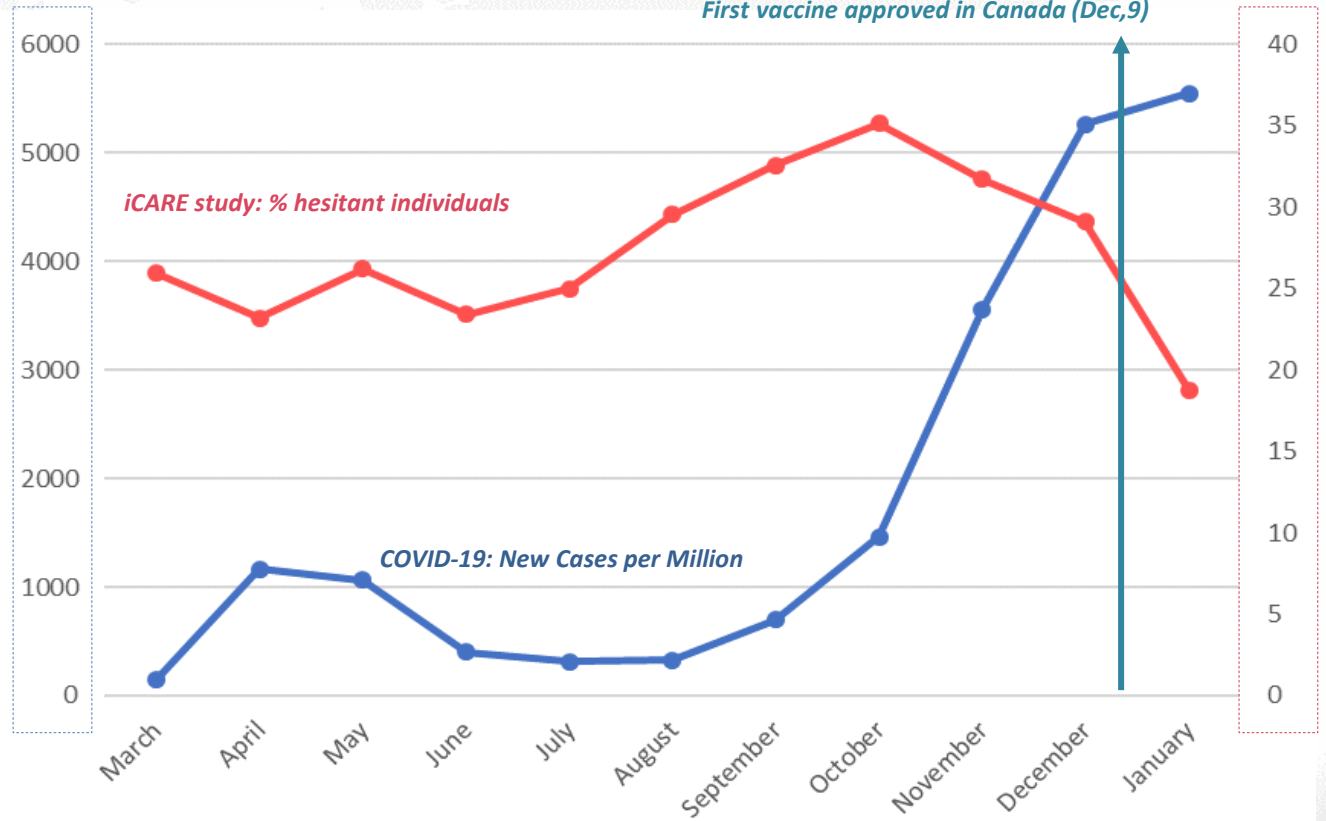




Levels and trend of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in Canada



Levels of hesitancy peaked in October 2020 (32%), and were the lowest in January 2021 (19%)

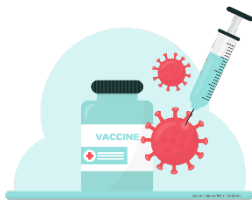




Profile of hesitant individuals in Canada

Age: *

- Less than 29 years **32%**
- 30-69 years 25%
- 70 years or more 16%



Education: *



- High school/lower **28%**
- Graduate/Postgraduate 24%

Sex: *



Male 22%
Female **26%**

Seasonal flu vaccination* (in the last 5 years):



- 3-5 x 11%
- 0/1/2 x **36%**

Perceived income: *



- Top third 17%
- Middle third 27%
- Bottom third **35%**

Employment: *

- Employed 26%
- Student **34%**
- Unemployed 22%

Health risk conditions: *

- Yes 21%
- No **27%**

Living area: *



Urban 24%
Suburban 25%
Rural **28%**



Conclusions

- Our findings indicate that **one quarter** of Canadians reports some levels of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy
- Some sections of the population are more hesitant than others
 - *Women, Younger adults, Students, Rural dwellers, Individuals with lower income and education*
 - *People without pre-existing health conditions, and without previous record of flu vaccinations*
- Reducing vaccine hesitancy represents urgent challenge for the country, and our hesitancy mapping may support the development of targeted communication strategies that should include consistent messaging, prioritize equity, foster transparency and trust-building across different communities.





Acknowledgments

Take the survey: www.iCAREstudy.com

Keep updated: @mbmc_cmcm

Contact us: covid19study@mbmc-cmcm.ca

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