

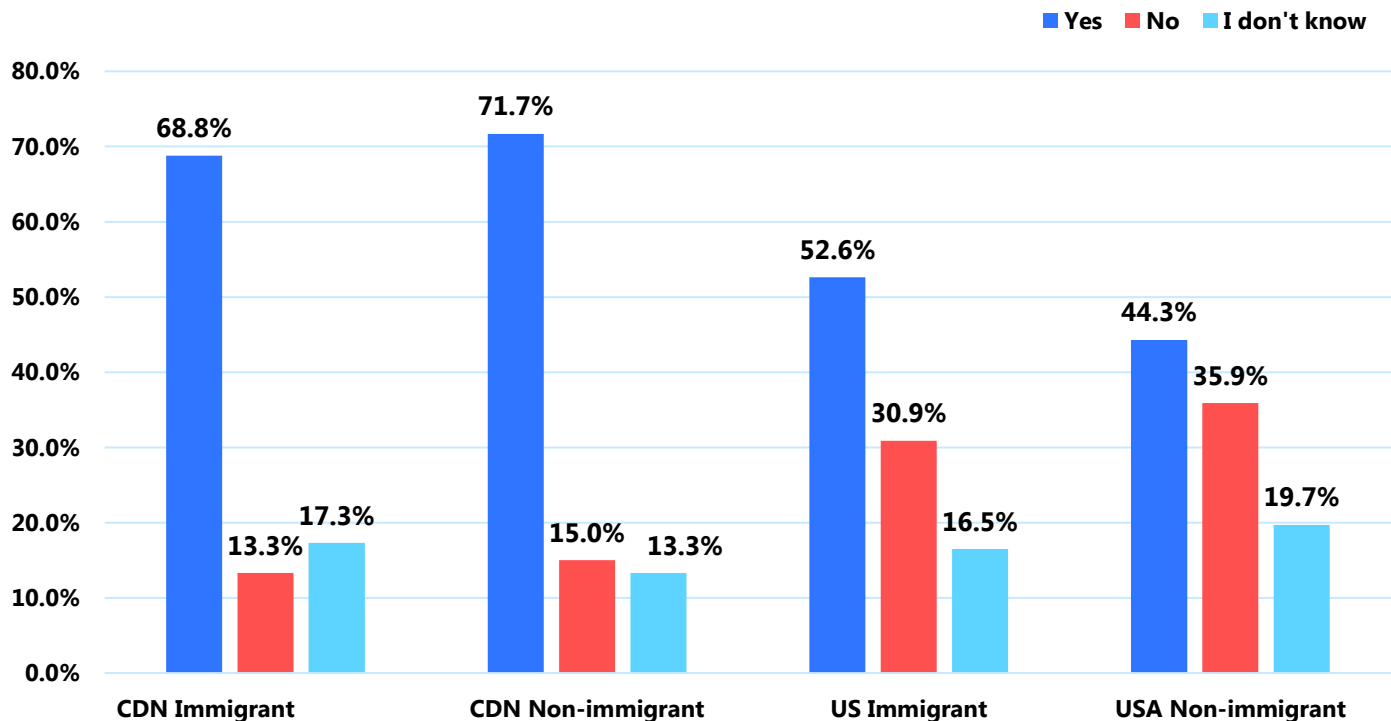
COVID Impacts

July 2021

NEWCOMERS: COVID-19 VACCINE ELIGIBILITY AND HESITANCE

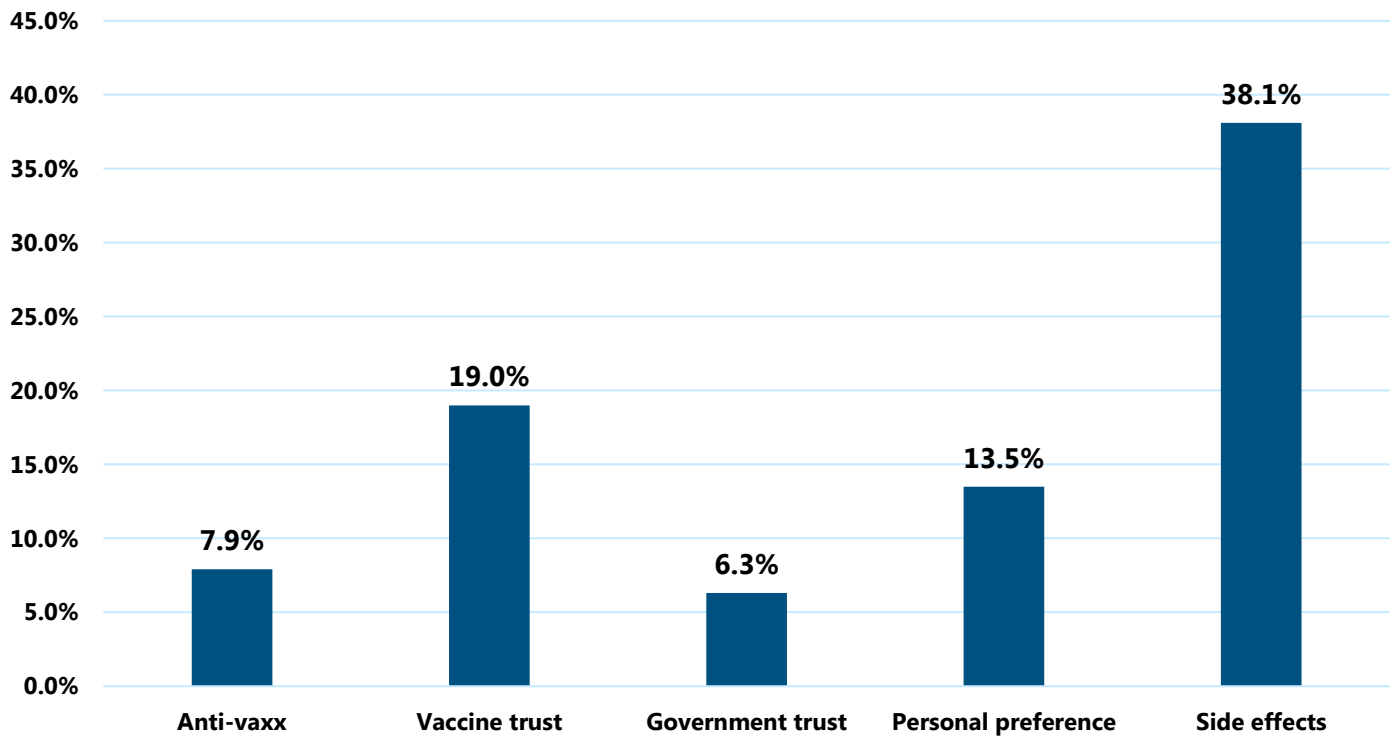
A critical factor in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic has been the development and approval of vaccines. Newcomers must have easy access to accurate and reliable information on COVID-19 vaccines to make informed decisions. This factsheet provides an overview of COVID-19 vaccine intention and hesitance among newcomers, as well as key issues to consider. Vaccine hesitancy refers to “a reluctance to receive recommended vaccination because of concerns and doubts about vaccines that may or may not lead to delayed vaccination or refusal of one, many or all vaccines”.

CANADA AND USA COMPARED: VACCINE INTENTION OF IMMIGRANTS (N=5303)



COVID-19 Impacts survey 2 findings indicated that immigrants in Canada (69%) are more likely to take the COVID-19 vaccine compared to immigrants in the US (53%). Similarly, non-immigrants in Canada (72%) are more likely to take the COVID-19 vaccine compared to non-immigrants in the US (44%). Overall, both groups in the United States were more vaccine hesitant than those in Canada. We found the proportion of uncertainty about taking the COVID-19 vaccine higher among the US immigrants (17%) and non-immigrants (20%) than Canadian immigrants (17%) and non-immigrants (13%). Overall, vaccine intentions are more positive in Canada than US.

REASONS FOR VACCINE HESITANCY AMONG IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA (N=539)



Although there are a variety of reasons for vaccine hesitancy, the experiences of immigrants, especially those who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) may also be impacted by medical discrimination.

Reasons for vaccine hesitancy among newcomers can be multifactorial.

Some common reasons are:

- A long history of abuse and unethical treatment by the medical establishment
- Unsure how vaccines work
- Cannot access vaccine/fear of deportation among those without status
- Lack of translation/information for refugees
- Feel that they are immune or will not get very ill from COVID-19
- Distrust in government/science
- Misinformation online
- Concerns about its effectiveness or side effects

CANADIAN OVERVIEW

The already existing challenges that newcomers faced when accessing healthcare in Canada worsened during this pandemic. In most cases, they are ineligible for health coverage programs and federal COVID-19 relief. Data on newcomer experiences are scarce due to governmental delay or resistance to releasing critical information.

Newcomers are at a higher rate of getting COVID-19 due to crowded living conditions and overrepresentation in jobs deemed “essential” work. For instance in Ontario, 43.5% of COVID-19 cases are racialized visible minorities. Newcomers are also overrepresented in COVID-19 on hospital admissions.

Immunization rates can be increased by providing culturally appropriate educational materials in multiple languages and having translators available in clinics to improve access to healthcare services during this pandemic.



POLICY AND PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

- How do we get communities meaningfully involved in vaccine planning?
- Are the needs of marginalized communities different from one another?
 - Do we need to have different education outreach plan for immigrants versus native-born?
- How can we ensure our recovery is equitable and inclusive?
- How can we ensure social change due to the pandemic is equitable and long-lasting?

REFERENCES

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

The researchers: A cross-national team of over 30 researchers led by Dr. Lori Wilkinson, Dr. Kiera Ladner and Dr. Jack Jedwab, received funding from CIHR for this study *COVID-19's differential impact on the mental and emotional health of Indigenous Peoples and Newcomers: A socioeconomic analysis of Canada, US and Mexico.*

The study: The team has been collecting data in Canada since March 9 and the United States since March 27, 2020. Ongoing survey waves now include Mexico. Our goal is to measure and follow the changes in attitudes, behaviours, health and socioeconomic outcomes among persons living in all three countries using a mixed methodology of surveys and unstructured interviews.

Fact sheet prepared by Sally Ogoe (University of Manitoba)

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