

COVID-19 outbreaks in nursing and seniors' homes associated with certain facility characteristics

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Nursing and residential care residents and staff have been particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, nursing homes (also called long-term care homes) and seniors' homes (also called retirement homes or assisted living facilities) have accounted for a significant number of cases and the majority of COVID-19-related deaths across Canada.

A new study released today, entitled "[Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in nursing and residential care facilities in Canada](#)," provides preliminary results tracking the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on nursing homes, seniors' homes, mental health facilities and other residential care facilities (e.g., facilities for women and facilities for substance use).

According to the study, for the period up to and including December 31, 2020, the percentage of responding residential care facilities that reported a COVID-19 outbreak (defined as at least one case among residents) at any point in 2020 was highest in Ontario (32%), followed by Quebec (31%), the Prairies (27%), British Columbia (17%) and the Atlantic provinces (3%).

COVID-19 cases among staff were the most significant predictor of an outbreak in both nursing homes and seniors' homes: facilities that reported at least one case among employees were more likely to have an outbreak compared with facilities without a case among staff (4.2 times higher in nursing homes and almost 7 times higher in seniors' homes). Compared with the smallest facilities, the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak in the largest facilities was 3.5 times higher in nursing homes and 2.2 times higher in seniors' homes.

Among nursing homes, facilities that reported staff shortages had a slightly increased risk (1.2 times higher) of an outbreak, compared with facilities that did not report staff shortages. Among seniors' homes, facilities with private rooms only (compared with those that either include shared rooms or have shared rooms only) had a slightly lower risk of a COVID-19 outbreak (0.86 times lower). These results are in line with other recent research in Canada.

This study also provides new insights into some of the challenges faced by facilities as a result of the pandemic. For example, about 86% of facilities reported experiencing at least one staff-related challenge (e.g., an increase in absenteeism or an increase in overtime) in 2020. Nursing homes were more likely to report staff-related changes compared with other types of facilities.

Note to readers

This article is the first to use preliminary results from the 2020 Nursing and Residential Care Facility Survey (NRCFS), which collected basic information on facility characteristics, such as employee and resident counts for the 2019/2020 fiscal year, as well as information related to the COVID-19 pandemic up to and including December 31, 2020.

*The NRCFS data file and these results are considered preliminary. The results presented in *The Daily* and the accompanying article are based on 4,217 nursing and residential care facilities in Canada that reported having at least one bed, at least one resident and at least one employee. Excluded were those that did not meet the listed criteria, had missing or invalid data, or were considered to be out of scope for the survey.*

The official release of the NRCFS data file and summary data tables on facility characteristics within the industry (e.g., number of employees, services offered by facilities) is scheduled for September 2021.



Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5342](#).

The full article "[Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in nursing and residential care facilities in Canada](#)" is now available as part of the publication *StatCan COVID-19 Data to Insights for a Better Canada* ([45280001](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).