

Compliance with precautions against COVID-19

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, September 15, 2022

Canadians were generally compliant with precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as mask-wearing and self-isolating, in the earlier waves of the pandemic. However, from November 2020 to April 2021, males and people living in rural areas were less compliant with COVID-19 precautions than females and people living in urban areas. The article "[Compliance with precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Canada](#)" used the first cycle of the Canadian COVID-19 Antibody and Health Survey to examine which population groups were less compliant with precautions and where they were located in Canada.

In addition to males and people in rural areas, individuals living in the territorial capitals and individuals aged 34 and younger (compared with people aged 65 and older) were less compliant overall, even after taking other characteristics into account. Compliance also differed according to whether precautions were "consistently" recommended, such as masking indoors, or "usually" recommended, such as avoiding crowds or large gatherings.

Males were almost twice as likely to be less compliant with precautions than females (relative risk [RR] = 1.84; confidence interval [CI]: 1.54 to 2.19). Evidence from other studies suggest that the lower compliance of males may be explained by an uncertainty in their ability to comply with public health measures and a lack of faith in said measures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Canadians aged 18 and younger (RR = 1.78; CI: 1.16 to 2.72) and 19 to 34 (RR = 1.67; CI: 1.12 to 2.50) were over one and a half times more likely to be less compliant with precautions compared with adults aged 65 and older. Owing to public health messaging, older Canadians may have been more aware of their vulnerability, which may have led to increased compliance.

There were differences in compliance across regions, possibly because of differences in COVID-19 infection rates, public health measures and their implementation. For example, Canadians in the territorial capitals were found to be less compliant (RR = 3.11; CI: 2.38 to 4.06) than Canadians living in Ontario. However, the age demographic in the Territories is younger than in the rest of Canada, the Territories generally had fewer COVID-19 case counts than the other provinces, and public health measures were less restrictive in the Territories than in the rest of Canada.

Continuing to understand which population groups are less likely to comply with precautions and where they are located in Canada can serve to identify groups that policy makers and public health messaging should target in relation to possible future waves of COVID-19, other pandemics and other public health crises.

The article "[Compliance with precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Canada](#)" is now available in the September 2022 online issue of *Health Reports*, Vol. 33, No. 9 ([82-003-X](#)).

This issue of *Health Reports* also contains the articles "[Linkage of the nationally representative Canadian Community Health Survey - Nutrition 2004 to routinely collected mortality records](#)" and "[An analysis of cannabis home cultivation and associated risks in Canada, before and after legalization](#)."

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