

Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians: First results from crowdsourcing

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Thursday, April 23, 2020

The magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented and is having a profound effect on the health, social and economic activities of Canadians. Statistics Canada is committed to supporting decision makers and to informing Canadians by generating rich, timely and relevant data and analysis about the current pandemic.

Recently, Statistics Canada drew on its unique relationship with Canadians to develop a new initiative to generate data and analysis quickly and effectively via crowdsourcing—and Canadians responded.

From April 3 to 9, 2020, close to 200,000 people visited Statistics Canada's website and took part in the online questionnaire about how COVID-19 is affecting their lives. Statistics Canada would like to thank participants who took the time to answer these important questions during this challenging time.

Today, Statistics Canada is releasing the first of a series of results based on crowdsourcing. Over the next few weeks, new crowdsourcing initiatives will be launched to get timely information about other important issues, such as the extent to which COVID-19 is affecting the lives and well-being of different groups of Canadians. Canadians are invited to keep coming to the website in order to participate.

Readers should note that unlike other surveys conducted by Statistics Canada, crowdsourcing data are not collected under a sample design using a probability-based sampling. As a result, the findings reported below cannot be applied to the overall Canadian population.

The objective of this first release is to better understand how crowdsourcing participants are reacting to the crisis, with a focus on differences across age groups and gender. Examining how various population groups are reacting to the pandemic is important, because not all Canadians will experience COVID-19 the same way.

Results indicate that senior participants are the most likely to be concerned about their own health and are also concerned about maintaining social ties. Younger people, on the other hand, are proportionately more likely to be concerned about the social and economic consequences of the pandemic.

Close to 6 in 10 seniors report being very or extremely concerned about their own health

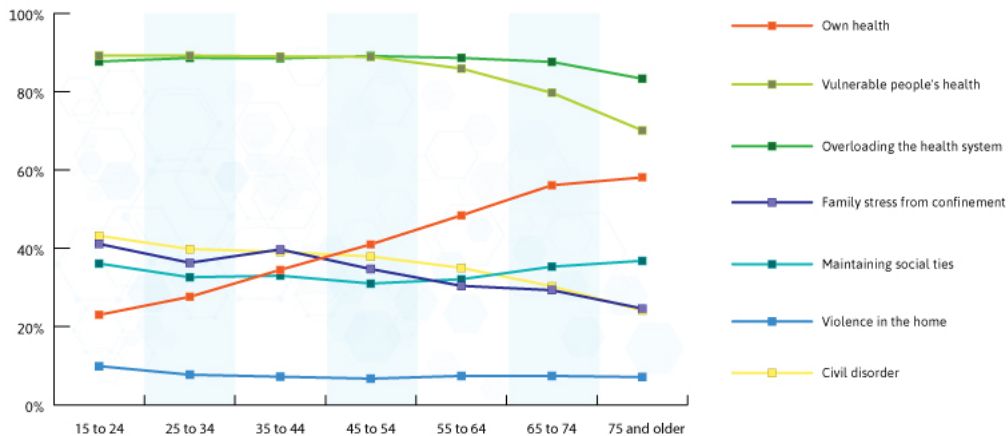
Crowdsourcing participants were asked how concerned they were about a variety of situations stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some concerns were shared by a majority of participants, regardless of age. For example, at least 80% of participants in all age groups reported being very or extremely anxious about overloading the health system. Similarly, the vast majority of participants reported that they were worried about vulnerable people's health.

Other worries, however, were more specific to older Canadians. Specifically, close to 6 in 10 people aged 65 and older reported that they were very or extremely concerned about their own health, compared with 23% among those aged 15 to 24 and 28% among those aged 25 to 34. Similar results were found for men and women.



Infographic 1 – Proportion of crowdsourcing participants who were very or extremely worried about certain COVID-19 related issues, by age group



Source: Crowdsourcing: Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians, April 2020

Maintaining social ties was also a concern for seniors, particularly among those aged 75 and older (37%). According to census data, one-third of seniors in this age group live alone, and may therefore be more at risk of social isolation. Because seniors are more likely to have a limited social network, lone seniors may be more at risk in the context of the pandemic.

Older Canadians were also more likely to report that they had made plans to communicate with families and friends than their younger counterparts (Table 1). This was especially the case among women aged 75 and older, who are more likely to live alone. In this age group, 66% of women and 55% of men reported that they had made plans to communicate with family members or friends.

Younger participants are more likely to be concerned about social effects of the pandemic

Younger participants were less focused on personal health worries, and more focused on social stressors resulting from the pandemic, such as family stress from confinement or the possibility of civil unrest. Previous research has shown that younger people have a higher degree of social interactions, but a lower level of trust in their neighbours and strangers.

Specifically, participants aged 15 to 24 were more likely to report that they were very or extremely concerned about stress from confinement at home (41%), a concern they also shared with adults aged 35 to 44 (40%) who are more likely to be living with young children. These figures compared with 30% or below among participants aged 55 and older.

Younger participants aged 15 to 24 were also more likely to be very or extremely worried about the possibility of civil disorder (43%). This compared with 24% among participants aged 75 and older.

Like their older counterparts, maintaining social ties was also a concern for participants aged 15 to 24 (36%), who often had to put aside busy lives in order to follow social distancing rules.

That being said, younger participants were less likely to have made plans to communicate with their friends or family, relative to their older counterparts. Young men aged 15 to 24 were even less likely to have made such plans, at 44% (compared with 52% for women in the same age group).

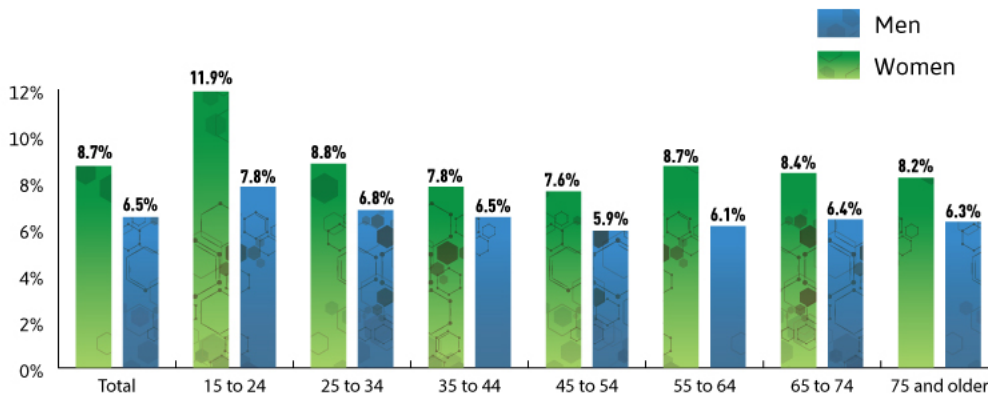
Young women are more likely to be concerned about violence in the home

In a previous Statistics Canada [survey](#) conducted in the early stages of the pandemic, 10% of women and 6% of men reported that they were concerned about the possibility of violence in the home.

Results from crowdsourcing echo this finding, as women in all age groups were more likely than men to report being very or extremely anxious about the possibility of violence in the home.

Young women aged 15 to 24, however, were significantly more likely to report that they were very or extremely anxious about the possibility of violence in the home (12%), relative to men in the same age group (8%).

Infographic 2 – Proportion of crowdsourcing participants who reported being very or extremely anxious about the possibility of violence in the house, by age group and by gender



Source: Crowdsourcing: Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians, April 2020

Youth are also more likely to feel the economic pinch of the crisis

Young participants were also more likely than older participants to report that the current crisis would have an impact on their job or finances. These findings echo the most recent report from the Labour Force Survey, which indicated that young workers were the most impacted by job losses in the aftermath of the crisis.

Specifically, close to one-half of participants aged 15 to 24 reported that the COVID-19 pandemic would have a "moderate" or "major" impact on their ability to meet their financial obligations. This compared with an overall rate of 34% for all participants (Table 2).

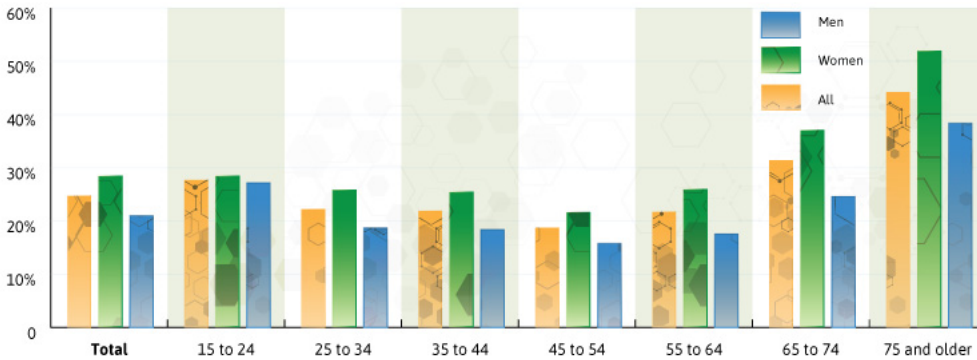
Similarly, youth were also more likely than older participants to think that they would be losing their job or self-employment income as a result of the pandemic (43%, compared with 28% for all participants). The results above were similar for both men and women.

Seniors visit grocery stores and drugstores less frequently, but make greater use of delivery services

Perhaps owing to greater concern about their health, senior participants were generally less likely than younger participants to report that they had been to a grocery store or a drugstore in the past week.

This was particularly the case among women aged 75 and older. More than one-half of women in this age group had not been to a grocery store or drugstore in the past week (Chart 3). This compared with approximately one-fifth of women aged 45 to 54.

Infographic 3 – Proportion of crowdsourcing participants who did not go to the grocery store or a drugstore in the week preceding the survey, by age group and by gender



Source: Crowdsourcing: Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians, April 2020

While seniors were less likely to go to a grocery store or drugstore, they were more likely to use delivery services to get food or medication. About 25% of seniors aged 65 to 74 and 32% of seniors aged 75 and older reported using such services, and these proportions were similar between men and women (Table 3).

Older participants, however, were less likely than younger participants to have ordered prepared food. Women were generally less likely than men to have used these services.

Note to readers

Data in this release are from Statistics Canada's Crowdsourcing: Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians. The crowdsourcing questionnaire collects data on the current economic and social situation, as well as on people's physical and mental health, to effectively assess the needs of communities and implement suitable support measures during and after the pandemic. This alternative method of collecting information can be used to supplement data obtained from more traditional sources, particularly due to its relatively low implementation cost and ability to increase the granularity of data in a timely manner. From April 3 to 9, close to 200,000 people living in Canada voluntarily answered the survey, which focused on behaviour and attitudes related to COVID-19. Over the next few weeks, new crowdsourcing initiatives will be launched to get timely information about other important issues, such as the extent to which COVID-19 is affecting the lives and well-being of different groups of Canadians. Canadians are invited to keep coming to the website in order to participate.

This analysis discusses the extent to which the concerns, precautions and weekly habits of participants varied across age groups.

Table 1
Precautions taken by crowdsourcing participants, by age group and by gender

	Avoided leaving the house	Avoided large crowds and gatherings	Used social distancing when out in public	Washed hands more regularly	Avoided touching one's face	Stocked up on essentials at a grocery store or pharmacy	Made a plan for communicating with family, friends and neighbours	Filled prescriptions	Worked from home ¹
	%								
Both sexes	93.7	95.2	96.2	96.7	73.2	72.4	52.7	41.3	68.6
15 to 24	93.2	95.7	94.9	95.6	73.2	63.7	47.5	24.8	61.3
25 to 34	93.9	96.1	96.8	96.3	74.9	72.1	51.1	27.1	69.5
35 to 44	94.1	95.4	97.1	96.5	74.4	75.7	50.4	35.4	74.7
45 to 54	93.4	95.1	97.0	97.0	74.3	74.6	50.4	43.7	73.4
55 to 64	93.9	95.0	96.8	97.2	74.3	73.4	55.3	51.3	65.2
65 to 74	93.9	94.7	95.4	97.6	70.4	74.4	58.8	58.6	58.1
75 and older	92.0	92.0	91.4	96.4	62.5	70.3	59.9	60.7	60.9
Women	95.0	95.5	96.5	97.4	76.4	74.5	57.2	45.6	66.4
15 to 24	94.4	96.2	96.6	96.7	75.2	66.0	51.5	31.3	59.0
25 to 34	94.9	96.4	97.4	97.1	77.2	73.6	54.6	32.2	67.5
35 to 44	95.2	95.7	97.5	97.2	76.8	77.0	52.9	40.1	72.8
45 to 54	94.6	95.1	97.4	97.4	77.4	76.1	54.3	47.7	71.3
55 to 64	95.2	95.5	96.7	98.2	78.6	76.0	61.6	54.4	62.0
65 to 74	95.4	94.7	94.8	97.9	74.8	76.9	64.2	60.2	56.3
75 and older	94.8	93.2	91.1	97.4	67.4	73.5	66.5	62.9	67.2
Men	92.4	94.9	95.8	96.0	69.9	70.3	48.1	36.9	70.6
15 to 24	92.0	95.3	93.3	94.6	71.4	61.6	43.8	18.6	63.5
25 to 34	93.0	95.8	96.2	95.5	72.7	70.5	47.6	21.9	71.4
35 to 44	92.9	95.2	96.6	95.9	72.0	74.3	47.8	30.6	76.7
45 to 54	92.3	95.0	96.7	96.5	71.0	73.1	46.3	39.7	75.4
55 to 64	92.6	94.5	96.9	96.1	69.9	70.7	49.0	48.2	68.2
65 to 74	92.0	94.7	96.1	97.2	64.9	71.4	52.1	56.6	59.8
75 and older	89.9	91.2	91.6	95.5	58.6	67.8	54.8	58.9	58.2

1. Among those who had a job.

Source(s): Crowdsourcing: Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians (5323).

Table 2
Proportion of crowdsourcing participants who reported that the crisis would have an impact on their financial obligations and job security, by age group and by gender

	Major or moderate impact on ability to meet financial obligations or essential needs	Strongly agree or agree that they might lose their main job or self-employment income
	%	
Both sexes	33.8	28.2
15 to 24	48.3	42.6
25 to 34	38.7	32.4
35 to 44	37.1	31.3
45 to 54	36.5	31.2
55 to 64	31.5	27.0
65 to 74	18.4	12.7
75 and older	11.9	5.4
Women	33.8	27.5
15 to 24	51.1	45.0
25 to 34	39.9	32.5
35 to 44	37.2	30.7
45 to 54	36.8	30.4
55 to 64	30.5	25.7
65 to 74	17.8	11.0
75 and older	9.3	3.6
Men	33.8	28.9
15 to 24	45.6	40.2
25 to 34	37.6	32.3
35 to 44	37.1	31.9
45 to 54	36.3	32.0
55 to 64	32.5	28.4
65 to 74	19.2	14.8
75 and older	13.9	6.8

Source(s): Crowdsourcing: Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians (5323).

Table 3
Proportion of crowdsourcing participants who used a delivery service at least once in the preceding week, by age group and by gender

	For groceries or a drugstore	For prepared food
	%	
Both sexes	20.7	31.1
15 to 24	14.1	44.1
25 to 34	19.2	44.8
35 to 44	23.5	36.8
45 to 54	19.6	30.4
55 to 64	18.7	20.2
65 to 74	25.3	16.1
75 and older	31.8	14.6
Women	21.5	29.6
15 to 24	14.8	41.8
25 to 34	19.8	43.8
35 to 44	23.9	35.4
45 to 54	20.4	29.0
55 to 64	19.5	19.6
65 to 74	26.7	15.4
75 and older	33.1	14.3
Men	19.8	32.5
15 to 24	13.5	46.3
25 to 34	18.6	45.9
35 to 44	23.1	38.3
45 to 54	18.9	31.8
55 to 64	17.9	20.8
65 to 74	23.5	16.9
75 and older	30.8	14.8

Source(s): Crowdsourcing: Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians (5323).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5323.

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).