

# Impacts on Immigrants and People Designated as Visible Minorities

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### Key messages:

- Immigrants are disproportionately represented in jobs with greater exposure to COVID-19 – 34% of front-line/essential service workers identify as visible minorities (compared with 21% in other sectors).
- Visible minorities are also more likely to work in industries worst affected by the pandemic, such as food and accommodation services – compounding health and economic risks.
- Impact of COVID-19 on immigrants' employment could reverse gains made in recent years to close the gap
- Immigrants and visible minorities are more likely to report facing harassment, attacks, and stigma.
- Immigrants are more concerned with their health and social consequences of the pandemic and are more likely to take precautions, but less likely to get a vaccine.

## Evidence of differential rates of COVID among visible minorities in Canada – highlighting the need for more data on diverse populations

Concerns regarding differential impacts of COVID have prompted calls for the collection of race-based health data in Canada.

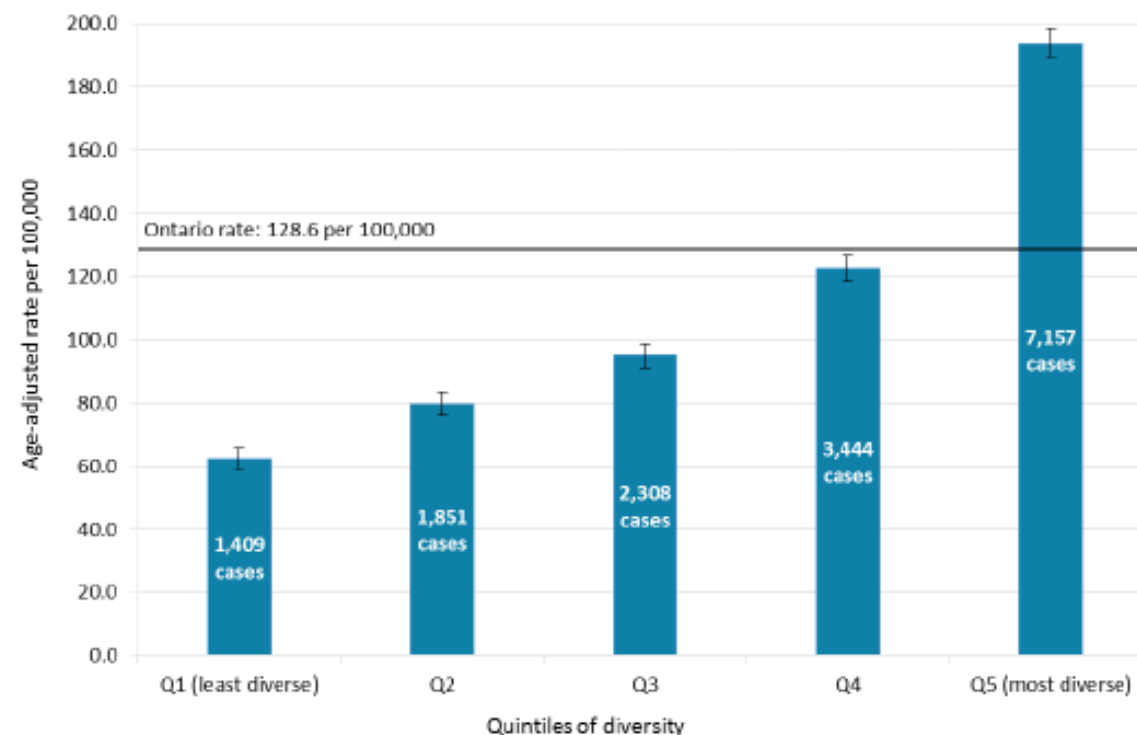
Currently, there is no requirement to collect race-based data in Canada related to COVID-19.

In Ontario, Census data were used to analyze the distribution of COVID cases across neighbourhoods with higher vs lower concentration of visible minorities. The findings show that the rate of...

- COVID-19 infections were **three times higher**
- hospitalizations rates were **four times higher** and
- deaths were **twice as high**

...among individuals living in the most diverse neighbourhoods compared with the least diverse neighbourhoods. Most diverse neighbourhoods tend to be in large urban areas.

Figure 1. Age-adjusted rate and number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 for each quintile of ethnic concentration: Ontario, January 15, 2020 to May 14, 2020

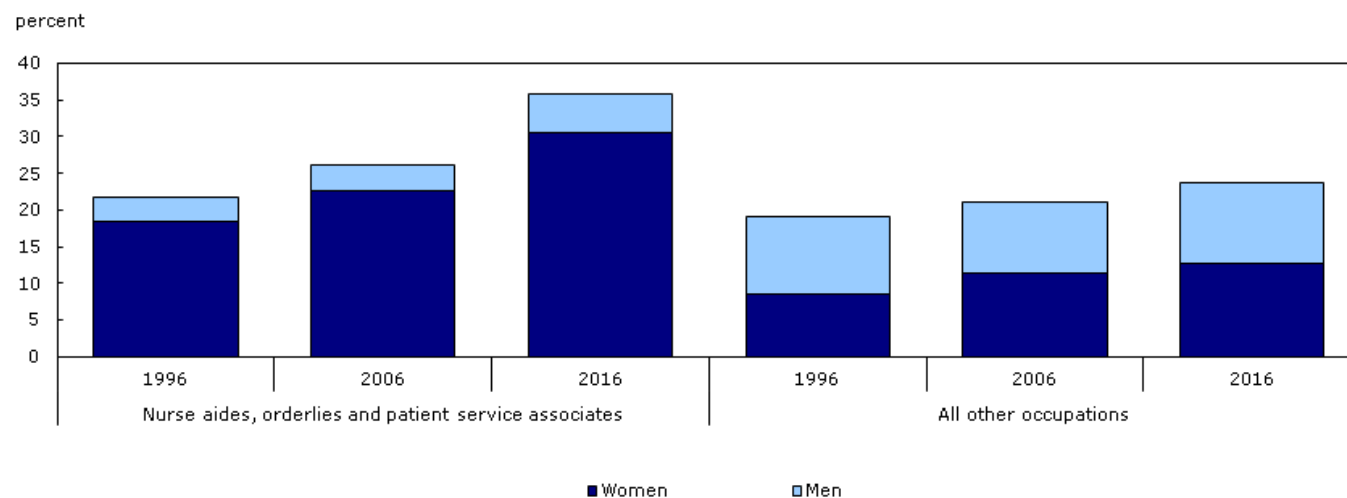


Source: Public Health Ontario. COVID-19 in Ontario – A Focus on Diversity, January 15, 2020 to May 14, 2020.

## Higher risk – Immigrants are disproportionately represented in sectors with greater exposure to COVID-19 – front-line/essential service workers, including long-term care, where the majority of deaths in Canada have occurred

- The proportion of immigrants employed as nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates rose from **22% to 36%** between 1996 and 2016.
- Prior to COVID, visible minorities were overrepresented in this sector – 34% of workers identifying as visible minorities (compared with 21% in other sectors).
- This trend has continued during COVID – in July, 24% of employed Filipino Canadians and 20% of employed Black Canadians worked in this industry compared with 14% of all workers.

Proportion of immigrants among nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates, Canada, 1996, 2006 and 2016

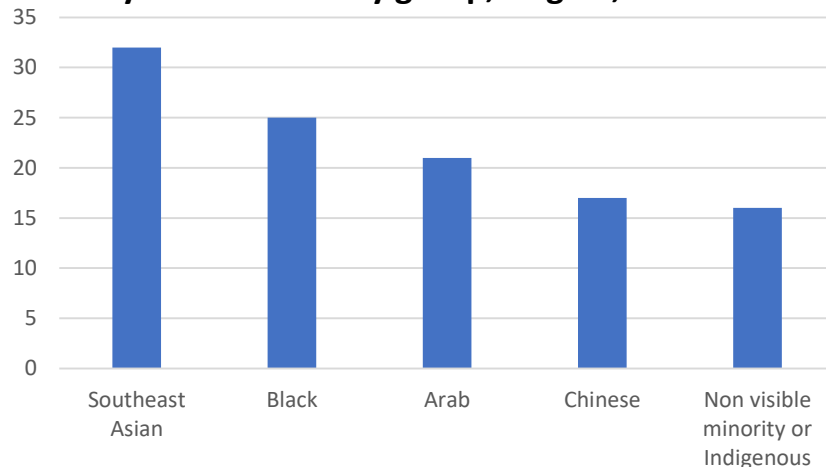


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1996, 2006 and 2016.

## Double jeopardy – Visible minorities are also more likely to work in industries worst affected by the pandemic, such as food and accommodation services – compounding health and economic risks

- Prior to COVID, visible minorities were overrepresented in the food accommodation sector – highest among Korean (19.1%), Filipino (14.2%) and Southeast Asian (14.0%) Canadians
- In August, the unemployment rate was significantly higher for several visible minority groups compared to the national rate (see Table) – this is in part due to over representation in hard hit sectors

**Proportion of low wage employees (make less than \$16.03 per hour by visible minority group, August, 2020**



Selected visible minority groups more likely to earn lower wages

**Unemployment rate by visible minority status, August 2020**

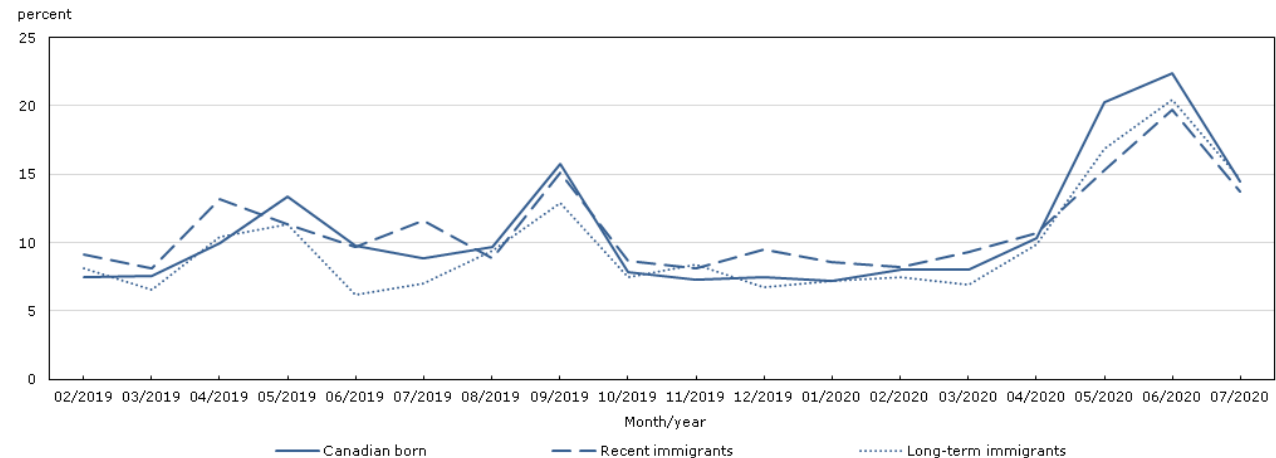
	%
Not a visible minority or Indigenous	9.4
Filipino	12.7
Chinese	13.2
Latin American	13.9
South Asian	14.9
Southeast Asian	16.6
Black	17.6
Arab	17.9

Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey, Supplement August 2020.

## Double jeopardy – Impact of COVID-19 on immigrants’ employment could reverse gains made in recent years to close the gap

- Evidence in Canada echoes studies in the United States and Europe that suggest immigrants are often more severely affected by economic downturns than the native born.
- Prior to COVID, the rate of transition from employment to non-employment\* was low and similar for immigrants and Canadian-born (2% to 4% from February 2019 to February 2020).
- As the pandemic hit, the rate-peaked in April at 17.3% for recent immigrants and 13.5% for the Canadian born and long-term immigrants.

Rates of transition from non-employment to employment among individuals aged 20 to 64, 2019-2020



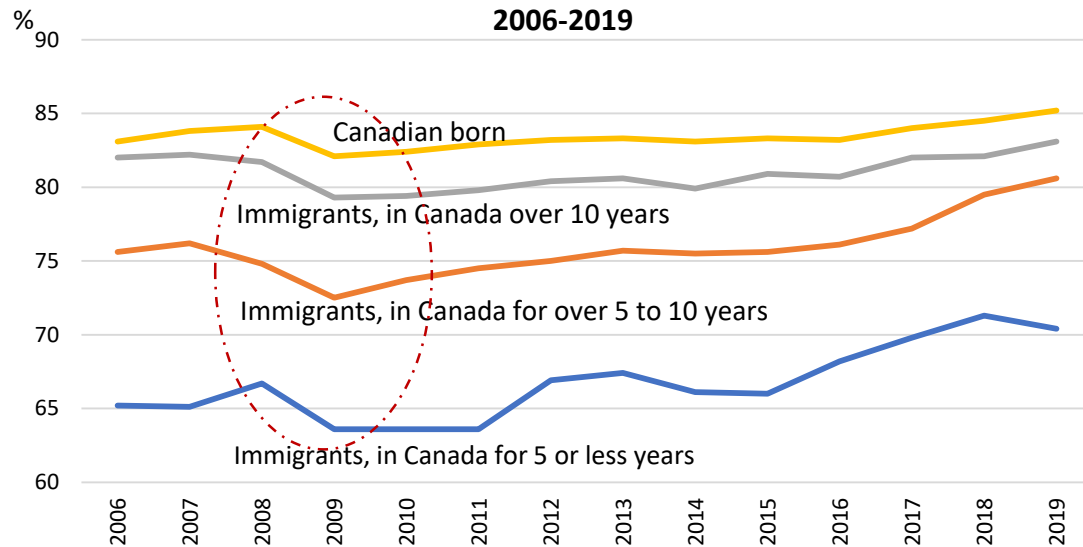
Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

- As the transition to employment increased during the partial recovery, recent immigrants had rates of transition to employment that were 5 percentage points lower than those of Canadian-born individuals in May, 3 points lower in June, and 1 point lower in July.
  - Recent immigrant women displayed the largest gap with their Canadian-born counterparts, at 5 percentage points in both May and June, and 2 points in July.

\*The rate of transition from employment (non-employment) to non-employment (employment) is the share of individuals employed (non-employed) in the previous month (e.g., February) who are not employed (employed) in the current month (e.g., March).

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0085-01.

Employment rate for immigrants and Canadian born aged 25 to 54, 2006-2019



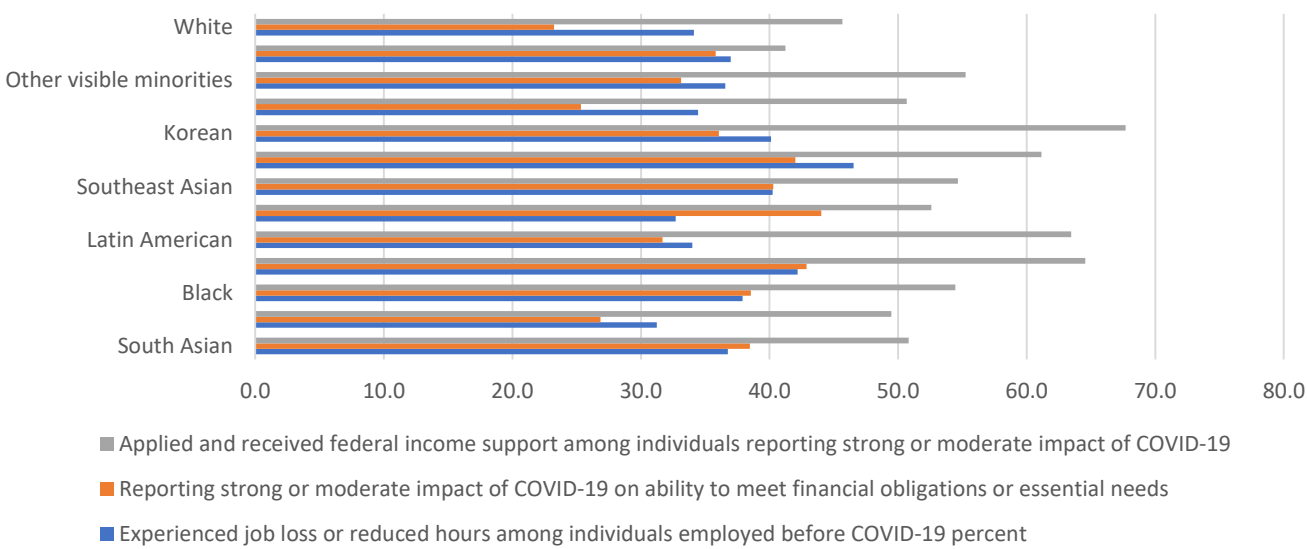


## Double jeopardy – Visible minorities, already economically vulnerable, face greater financial impacts

Prior to COVID, most visible minority groups were more likely to live in poverty than the White population.

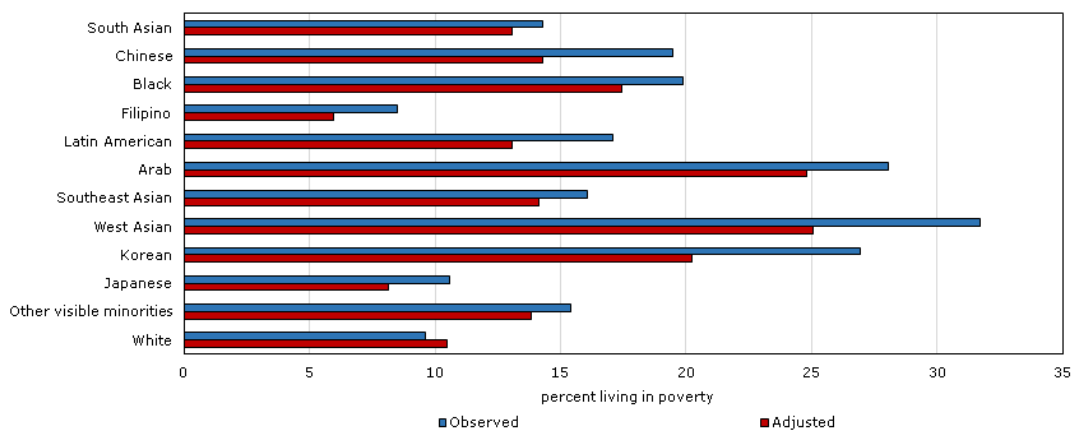
For Korean, Arab, and West Asian Canadians, the poverty rate ranged from 27% to 32% and among Black and Chinese-Canadians, the poverty rate reached 20%.

### Self-reported employment and financial impacts of COVID and use of federal income support among crowdsourcing participants by population groups, Canada, May-June 2020



Source: Statistics Canada, Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians - Trust in Others.

Observed and adjusted poverty rates among individuals aged 15 and over, 2015



Note: The poverty rate is based on the Market Basket Measure. Temporary residents are excluded from the calculation. The adjusted rates take into account group differences in immigration status, official language, education, age, sex, family size, employment status, province of residence and city size. Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population.

Among participants to a crowdsource survey who were employed prior to the shutdown, visible minority groups were more likely to report...

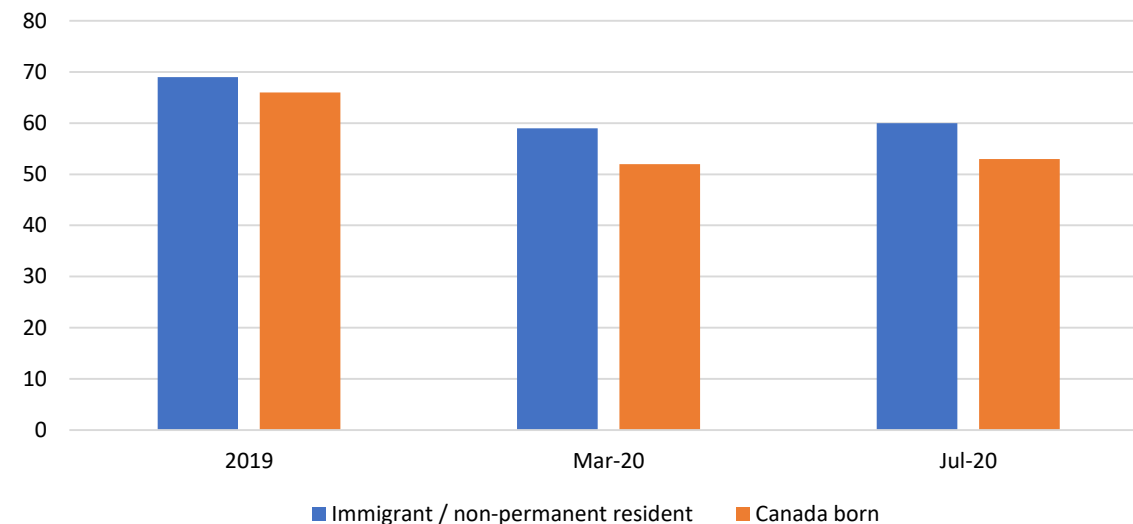
- Experiencing job loss or reduced work hours – Filipinos (42%) and West Asians (47%) compared with White respondents (34%).
- Not being able to meet financial obligations or essential needs – over 40% of Arabs, West Asians, and Filipinos respectively compared with 23% among Whites.

## Double jeopardy – Impacts of COVID-19 likely contributing to lower mental health levels among immigrants

Prior to COVID, immigrants generally reported similar levels of positive mental health compared with Canadian born (69% vs 66%).

Since COVID, positive mental health declined for both immigrants and Canadian-born, but positive mental health appears to be higher among immigrants (60% vs 53%).

Proportion of Canadians reporting excellent or very good mental health pre and post COVID by immigration status, Canada, 2019, March and July 2020

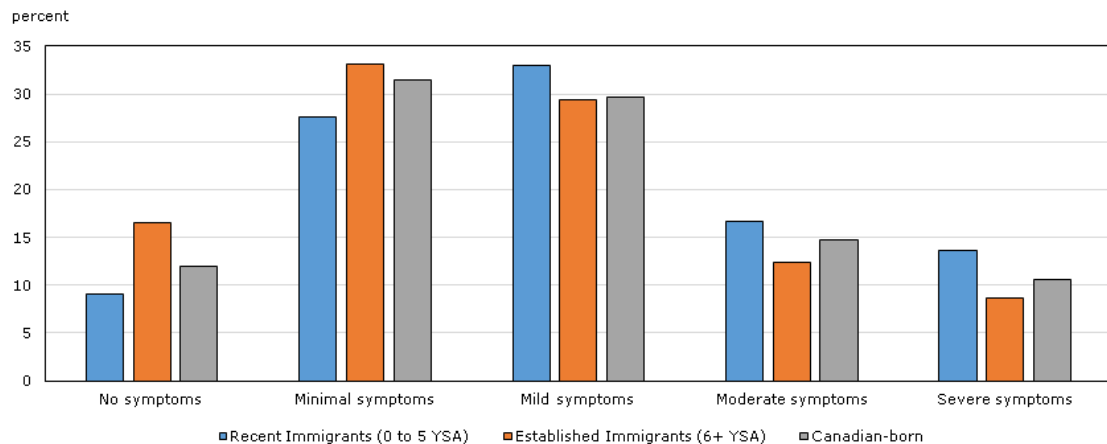


Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2019; Canadian Perspectives Survey Series 1; Canadian Perspectives Survey Series 4.

Recent immigrants responding to a crowdsourcing survey were more likely to report symptoms consistent with moderate to severe generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) more often (30%) than established immigrant (21%) or Canadian-born participants (26%).

- Recent female immigrants were more likely to do so compared with male respondents (39% vs 26%) – results were similar among established immigrants and Canadian-born participants.

Level of anxiety (GAD-7) of participants by immigrant status and period of immigration



Source: Statistics Canada, Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians – Your mental health.

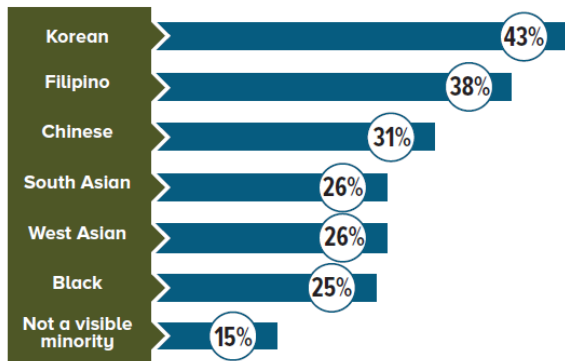


## Triple jeopardy – immigrants and visible minorities more likely to report facing an increase risk of harassment, attacks, and stigma – for some, adding to the health and economic impacts of COVID-19

Prior to the pandemic, **44%** of hate crimes were motivated by hatred of a race or ethnicity (2018).

Since COVID, visible minority participants of a crowdsourc survey were **three times more likely** to report a perceived increase in the frequency of harassment or attacks based on race, ethnicity or skin colour compared with the rest of respondent (18% and 6%).

- This difference was most pronounced among Chinese, Korean, and Southeast Asian participants.

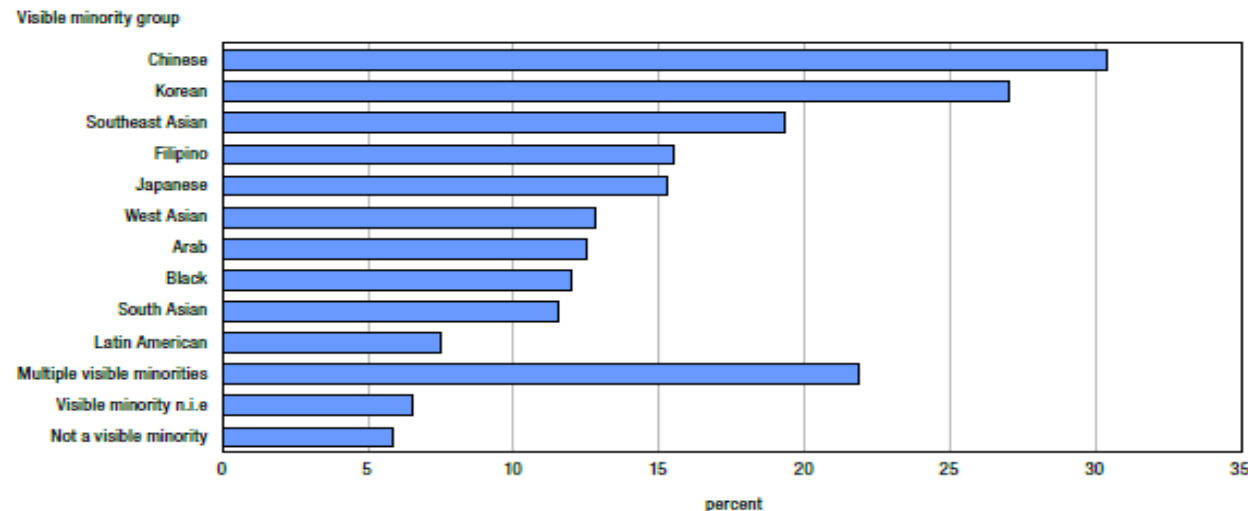


% who feel unsafe

**27%** of visible minority participants reported feeling **very or somewhat unsafe** when walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, compared with **15%** of participants who are not designated as visible minorities.

Among visible minority participants, more than **1 in 3 women** felt unsafe when walking alone after dark, compared with **1 in 5 men**.

Perceived increase in harassment or attacks on the basis of race, ethnicity, or skin colour in neighbourhood since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, by visible minority group, Canada, 2020



n.i.e. not indicated elsewhere  
Source: Statistics Canada, Crowdsourcing on perceptions of safety, May 12-25, 2020.

Immigrants were **almost twice as likely** as the Canadian born to report that they were afraid of being the target of unwanted behaviours (29% vs 17%) - among these individuals, immigrants were significantly more likely to report that they feared being stigmatized because of their racial identity (42% vs 9%).

Source: Statistics Canada, Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians - Perceptions of Safety, of Industry, May 2020.

## Managing the pandemic moving forward – Immigrants are more concerned with their health and social consequences of the pandemic and more likely to take precautions, but less likely to get a vaccine

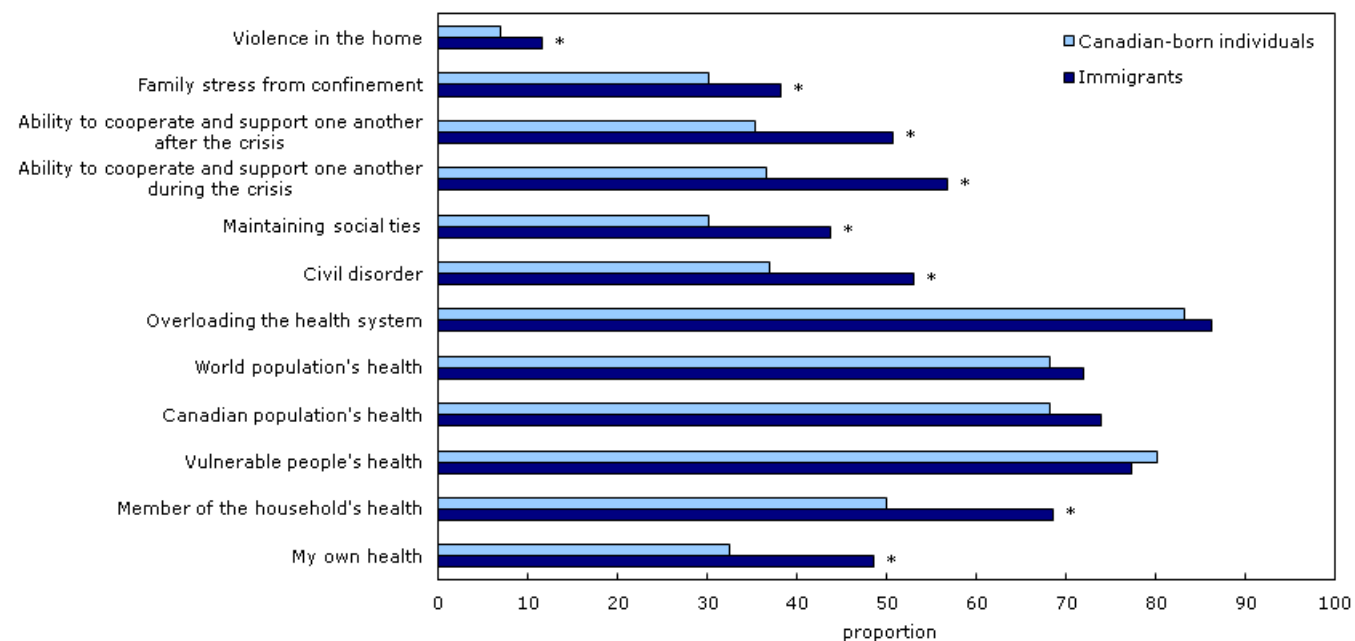
Immigrants were generally more concerned than Canadian-born individuals about the health risks of resuming activities.

Immigrants are more likely than Canadian-born individuals to continue taking precautions as COVID-19 safety measures are relaxed...

- wear masks (80% vs. 61%)
- avoid crowds and large gatherings (93% vs. 81%), and
- keep a 2 metre distance from others (89% vs. 78%).

Despite these trends, immigrants were **less likely** than those born in Canada to report that they would use a vaccine (52% vs 59%).

Proportion of immigrants and Canadian-born individuals aged 15 and older who reported that they were "very" or "extremely" concerned about selected social issues



\* significantly different from Canadian-born individuals ( $p < 0.05$ )

Source: Canadian Perspectives Survey Series, March and April 2020.

## Looking forward

- With the decline in immigration flows resulting from the pandemic, finding workers in front-line/essential service sectors could be a challenge.
  - Only 34,260 immigrants entered Canada in the second quarter of 2020 (compared with 94,280 in the second quarter of 2019) (Source: IRCC Admission of Permanent Residents Monthly Updates).
- Economic downturns may result in larger employment gaps between new immigrants and the Canadian-born population – eroding gains made in recent years, although the negative impact of recessions may be partially offset by the reduced number of new immigrants.
- New data development at Statistics Canada provides more timely data on the labour market outcomes and health status of immigrants and visible minorities.
- Accelerated digitalization after COVID-19 may create opportunities for skilled immigrants and visible minorities.
  - about 50% of adult recent immigrants had at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 28% among Canadian-born adult population.
  - among those with a university degree, 37% of adult immigrants were educated in a STEM field, compared with 18% among the Canadian born.