

The *Ku-gaa-gii pimitizi-win* Study

Investigating COVID-19 in a Cohort of People Experiencing Homelessness in Toronto

OCTOBER 2023 STUDY UPDATE

MAP



What is the *Ku-gaa-gii pimitizi-win* study?

As the pandemic persisted through 2020 and 2021, masking, social distancing and vaccinations were preventative measures for the general population. Yet, there was limited understanding of how people experiencing homelessness (PEH) were being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Ku-gaa-gii pimitizi-win* study is a 12-month, observational cohort study that was collaboratively designed to learn how COVID-19 was transmitted, and how it affected people experiencing homelessness in Toronto.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional territories of the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation, Anishnawbe, Wendat, Huron, and Haudenosaunee Indigenous Peoples. We pay respects to our ancestors and our present Elders.

The study name, *Ku-gaa-gii pimitizi-win*, translates in English to life is always/forever moving.



It honours the movement of homeless individuals across the land, the spirit and growth of the land we are on, and the force that connects us all to the future.

This research was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) (FDN VR5-173211) in partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada as part of the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force (CITF).

OBJECTIVES



TO MEASURE

The burden of COVID-19 infection



TO UNDERSTAND

Individual and system-level factors associated with COVID-19 infection



TO ASSESS

Health outcomes following COVID-19 infection

There are **3** research components in this study. This summary addresses the preliminary results of the quantitative component.

QUALITATIVE
STUDY



TRANSMISSION
MODELLING

QUANTITATIVE COHORT STUDY

Between June and September 2021, **736** individuals were randomly selected from **61** participating shelters, physical distancing hotels, and **1** urban encampment.

Survey interviews asked about sociodemographic information, history of known SARS-CoV-2 infection, and activities and behaviors related to COVID-19 or increased risk for, and recent housing and contact history.

Participants had a baseline interview and were re-contacted after **3, 6, 9** and **12** months for follow-up interviews.

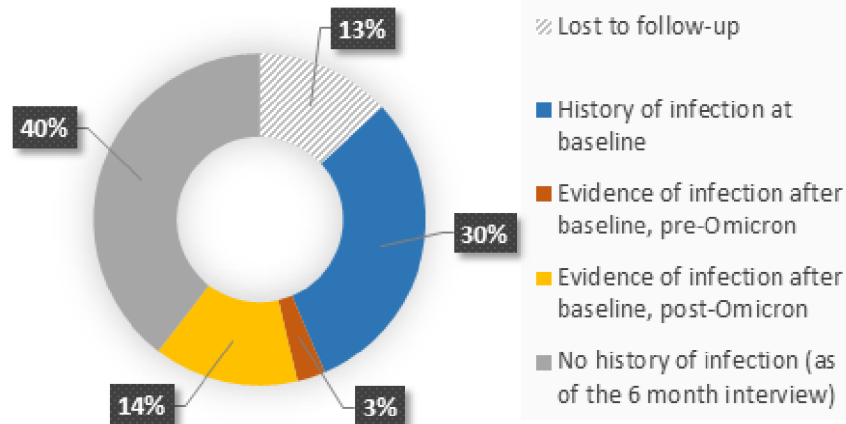
Early Results

Results are interim ONLY up to 6 months follow-up

Incidence: Learnings about “first” infections

- 30% of participants had a history of infection by their baseline interview (summer 2021).
- 17% of participants experienced their first COVID-19 infection within 6 months.

Ku-gaa-gii pimitizi-win participants' history of COVID-19 infection



75%

of infections were unknown to the participant, possibly due to low PCR testing availability over time.



84% of infections occurred after Omicron variants became dominant.

Factors positively associated with first infection by 6 months:

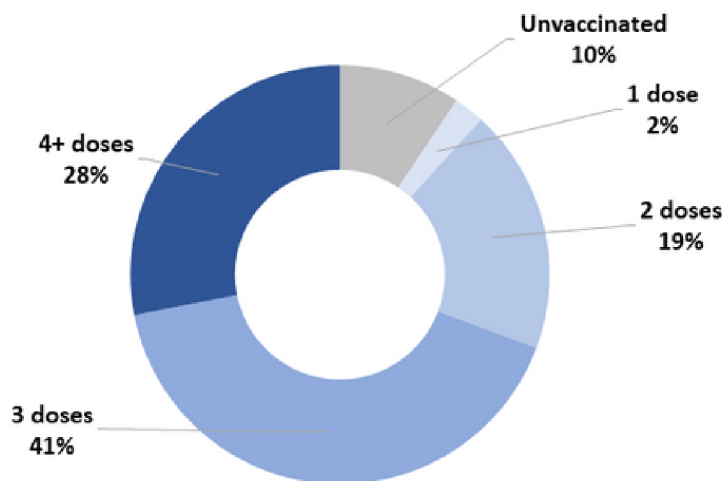
We explored many factors at baseline and their association with first infection, of which two appeared clinically relevant.



While first infection was higher among individuals with a recent history of immigration to Canada---the reason for association between recent immigration and risk of infection also requires further exploration.

Vaccination Uptake

Number of COVID-19 vaccination doses received



A majority of participants received 3 or more doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Factors associated with not receiving vaccination at baseline include:



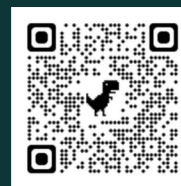
- **self-identification as Black**
- **self-identification as female**
- **younger age**
- **low levels of mask use in public spaces**

AMONG PEOPLE WHO DID NOT RECEIVE ANY VACCINES AT BASELINE, THE TOP THREE REASONS FOR DECLINING WERE:

1. Concerns about risks and side effects.
2. Not confident in the safety of the vaccine.
3. Prefer to wait until it seems safe to get the vaccine.

Stay tuned & refer to our website to learn more about the study:

<https://maphealth.ca/ku-gaa-gii-pimitizi-win/>



- 1. Final 12-month assessment of COVID-19 infection and acute health outcomes following infection**
- 2. Qualitative Community Report**
- 3. Rates of COVID-19 re-infection**
- 4. Long COVID research**
- 5. Mortality amongst people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic**
- 6. All final study reports, publications and presentations**