

Angus Reid Group shares inclusion in New England Journal of Medicine



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



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Dalla Lana
School of Public Health

INTRODUCTION

The study, which saw thousands of Angus Reid Forum members providing blood samples, is a testament to the trust Canadians have in our research. The Angus Reid Group is proud to have contributed meaningfully to the critical field of COVID-19 research in the midst of global uncertainty.

The Action to Beat Coronavirus (Ab-C) study is an achievement in research excellence made possible only through the rigour and depth of our researchers and partners, and the mutual respect of our member panelists whose engagement delivers unmatched data quality in Canada.

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NEARLY 30 PER CENT OF CANADIAN ADULTS – 9 million people – were infected during the Omicron variant wave early in 2022, compared with just 10 per cent who had been infected in the previous four waves, according to a new study led by Toronto researchers.

Despite the high numbers of infections, the study also revealed that every dose of vaccine and previous infection boosted immune responses.

Canadian adults with three vaccine doses and a past infection from COVID-19 had the highest protection.

The findings, published in a letter to the editor in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, fill a gap in understanding the scale of COVID-19's spread during the fifth wave, as well as Canadians' immunity to the virus, either through vaccination or natural infection. Provinces scaled back COVID-19 molecular diagnostic testing in December 2021, leaving policymakers and the public without reliable data to inform pandemic responses and to gauge community risk.



The study analyzed more than 5,000 blood samples representative of Canadian adults – members of the Angus Reid Forum, a public polling cohort



The study ran from January 15 to March 15, 2022

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From those results, the researchers determined that:

An estimated **9 million** of 29.7 million Canadian adults were newly infected during the Omicron wave.



Of those infected, one million were among the country's **2.3 million** unvaccinated adult population – representing **40 per cent** of all unvaccinated adults.

The Ab-C study is a collaboration among Unity Health Toronto, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, the Angus Reid Institute, and the Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute at Sinai Health. It is funded by the Government of Canada through its COVID-19 Immunity Task Force (CITF). Ab-C has been tracking the pandemic in Canada with periodic polling about lived experience and blood sample collection since May 2020, and will continue as long as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve.

The Ab-C study has started surveying approximately 1,300 adults who were not infected from the initial Omicron variant (called BA.1/1.1) to determine whether they were infected by the latest Omicron variant (called BA.2) from March to June 2022.

“We owe a great debt of gratitude to the thousands of Canadians, drawn from every region, who took the time to share specimens of their blood and complete related surveys. Their participation made this study possible,” said Dr. Angus Reid, chairman of the Angus Reid Institute and CEO of Angus Reid Group.