



Research Finds Significantly Lower Vaccination Rates For Black Canadians, Compared to Canadian Average

*Findings illustrate the need for important federal and provincial policy changes
required to increase vaccine uptake and better protect the health of Black Canadians*

TORONTO, ONTARIO, July 7, 2021—There is a significant gap in the vaccine hesitancy rates for Black Canadians versus the rest of the population. The findings, released today in a collaborative research project, include recommendations for important policy shifts at the federal and provincial levels of government.

Innovative Research Group (INNOVATIVE), in partnership with the African Canadian Civic Engagement Council (ACCEC) and Black Opportunity Fund (BOF), conducted the research study to quantitatively explore and explain current vaccination rates in Black Canadian populations.

“At the time of this survey, a 20-point gap existed among those who received at least one vaccine between White Canadians (65%) and Black Canadians (45%). While vaccine rates have since increased, the survey results demonstrate a wide gap in vaccine rates between White and Black Canadians,” said Jason Lockhart, Vice President of Innovative Research Group. “While a slim majority of unvaccinated Canadians showed some form of vaccine hesitancy, Black Canadians are most hesitant,” said Lockhart.

Indeed, the data reveals that while a majority of unvaccinated Canadians (52%) show some form of hesitancy when it comes to COVID-19 vaccines, Black Canadians are *most* hesitant, with 60% more likely to report some form of hesitancy, compared to 55% of unvaccinated White Canadians and 44% of unvaccinated non-Black visible minorities. While on the surface the numbers between Black and White Canadians do not seem dramatically different, this translates to 33% of the entire adult Black population showing some form of vaccine hesitancy, compared to 19% of the total adult White Canadian population and 25% for non-black visible minorities.

“In order to substantively lower the barriers that the research shows is keeping Black Canadians from getting vaccinated, there are a variety of policy shifts that are necessary, and we are calling on government to consider making them,” said Dunia Nur, President of Edmonton-based African Canadian Civic Engagement Council. “These include investing in strategies that work with Black-led and Black-focused community organizations to address COVID-19 vaccine knowledge gaps and related trust barriers. Much more is required to support the development and delivery of education on COVID-19 vaccines in a culturally safe manner, that considers language as well as differences in education and socio-economic disparity.”

The report further calls on government to mandate that employers provide paid time off to enable employees to receive COVID-19 Vaccines. Statistics Canada has noted that Black Canadian women are proportionally more likely to be healthcare and social service workers and are also more likely to work in precarious jobs. In addition, report findings indicate that being able to take time off to receive the COVID 19 vaccine is an important determinant of vaccine uptake.

The national survey, which was in field from mid-May to early June of this year, also attempts to explain the reasons why Black Canadians have a lower confidence in COVID-19 vaccines. Data analysis suggests that a lack of trust among both healthcare professionals and vaccine producers, coupled with vaccine safety concerns and education level are the leading factors for vaccine hesitancy among Black Canadians.

“What seems to be indicated in the findings is that trust – or lack thereof – is an issue in several ways,” said Dr. Ato Sekyi-Otu, Orthopedic Surgeon at William Osler Health System, and Black Opportunity Fund Healthcare Task Force lead. “While there is concern about the speed of development of COVID-19 vaccines, there also seems to be a lack of trust in the vaccine delivery mechanism, which is a direct comment on the face of health care professionals in our country. I know from my own experience as a medical practitioner of many years, that Black Canadians often don’t see themselves reflected in the medical system around them, and that’s as true for the practice of administering vaccines, as it is in any other facet of Canadian health care,” said Sekyi-Otu.

Consistent with improving the uptake of Canadian vaccine delivery, the report is further calling on government to publicly acknowledge that systemic racism exists in the healthcare system and to take the necessary steps to address it. These would include, investing in strategies to increase the number of Black physicians and nurses who can deliver information and care in culturally appropriate ways, and collecting race-based health and socio-demographic data to inform decision making and support effective intervention.

“Every inch closer that we come to closing the data gap, is one step forward towards better understanding how we can get to herd immunity,” said Lockhart. “We’ve only scratched the surface, but it is enough to signal that more research is needed with vulnerable communities to ensure that all Canadians, including Black Canadians, are receiving the support they need to encourage higher rates of vaccination.”

Survey Methodology

Findings noted above are extracted from an INNOVATIVE online poll conducted May 18th to June 4th, 2021. The online survey was conducted among a sample of n=2,838 adult Canadians, including an oversample of n=502 Black Canadians. The sample has been weighted to reflect the actual demographic composition of the Canadian population, resulting in an overall representative national sample size of 2,000 Canadians and representative national Black Canadians sample size of 400. Since the online survey was not a random probability-based sample, a margin of error cannot be calculated. Statements about margins of sampling error or population estimates do not apply to most online panels.

Full results of the survey can be found on the INNOVATIVE website via [the following link](#).



About Innovative Research Group

[INNOVATIVE](#) is a full-service market research firm with offices in Vancouver and Toronto. We work closely and collaboratively with our clients to uncover meaningful insights.

About the African Canadian Civic Engagement Council

[ACCEC](#) is a national public affairs organization that promotes and strengthens opportunities for African, Caribbean, Black, and Racialized Communities.

About Black Opportunity Fund

Formally established in June 2020, [Black Opportunity Fund](#) was founded and is led by a team of diverse Black Canadians across multiple provinces and with broad expertise. Black Opportunity Fund is dedicated to understanding the needs of the Black Canadian community and is uniquely positioned to bring together a broad range of stakeholders to dismantle barriers created by systemic racism. Black Opportunity Fund is a unique and dynamic partnership between the Black community, businesses, philanthropists, government, and foundations, with a mission of raising and mobilizing a permanent pool of capital to serve and empower the Black community.

For interviews with one or more spokespersons from the survey partner organizations, please contact:

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