



COVID-19 TESTING AND DIAGNOSIS AMONG TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE IN CANADA

The Study

In fall 2019, Trans PULSE Canada conducted a national survey of 2,873 trans and non-binary people aged 14+, of whom 1,184 consented to be re-contacted for future research. 820 participated in a COVID-specific online survey in English or French in Sept/Oct 2020. Data were weighted to represent the full 2019 sample, with 95% confidence intervals used to show a range of plausible values, since we were not able to survey every trans and non-binary person in Canada. Full-sample results are presented here; our team is developing an online [data dashboard](#) (coming winter, 2021) where results can be customized for sub-groups or intersections, as different groups can experience different pandemic impacts.

The Findings

Over one-third (37.8%) of respondents had been tested for COVID-19, of whom 0.5% tested positive. While a small proportion had been diagnosed with COVID-19, 15.0% suspected they had COVID-19 symptoms at some point since March 12, 2020 (the start of the pandemic). Approximately one in ten (9.4%) had avoided COVID-19 testing or care when they believed they needed it, of whom about 40% indicated that their avoidance was due to fear of discrimination. Of those who had accessed or wanted to access COVID-19 testing or care, 10.8% reported that they experienced discrimination when seeking these services. The majority were very (73.1%) or somewhat (16.6%) likely to get a COVID-19 vaccine once it is available.

The Implications

As of November, [27% of Canadians had been tested for COVID-19, of whom 2.6% tested positive](#). Our findings show high uptake of testing among trans and non-binary respondents (37.8%), despite facing [barriers to health care](#), even in urgent situations. That a small proportion of those tested were diagnosed with COVID-19 (0.5%) suggests that those trans and non-binary people who were at lower risk of infection were also seeking testing.

A proactive approach to COVID-19 prevention is also reflected in high levels of vaccine willingness: almost three-quarters said they were very likely to choose vaccination. In comparison, in late September, [39% of Canadians said they would get a vaccine](#) as soon as one becomes available. Nevertheless, these results indicate that trans and non-binary people face specific barriers to COVID-19 testing and care, and sometimes face discrimination when they actually access these services. As we enter the “third wave” of COVID-19 infections, it is critical that trans and non-binary friendly testing and care be available across Canada.

	%	95% CI ^a
Tested for COVID-19 (swab)	37.8	(34.3, 41.4)
COVID-19 diagnosis, among those tested ^b	0.5	(0.0, 1.2)
Suspected they had COVID-19 symptoms		
Yes	15.0	(12.3, 17.6)
No	65.8	(62.2, 69.3)
Unsure	19.3	(16.3, 22.2)
Wanted to test, but unable	10.3	(8.1, 12.6)
Avoided test/care when needed	9.4	(7.2, 11.6)
Experienced discrimination in testing/care ^c	10.8	(7.0, 14.5)
Will avoid test if symptoms develop ^d		
Yes	5.6	(3.7, 7.5)
No	82.7	(79.6, 85.7)
Unsure	11.7	(9.1, 14.2)
Likelihood of choosing to get COVID-19 vaccine		
Very likely	73.1	(69.7, 76.5)
Somewhat likely	16.6	(13.8, 19.4)
Somewhat unlikely	2.8	(1.5, 4.1)
Very unlikely	2.6	(1.3, 3.9)
Unsure	4.9	(3.2, 6.6)

a 95% confidence interval.

b Among those tested and reporting diagnosis (n=316).

c Among those who accessed or wanted to access services (n=367).

d Among those who have not had symptoms (n=694).

“[I avoided COVID-19 testing or care because] I’d had previous experiences of transphobic discrimination in health care, and a previous visit for COVID-19 testing and care was complicated by confusion about my gender.”



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Reports, presentations, and papers available at: transpulsecanada.ca