

What is a "Post-COVID" World?

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Last summer, we wrote a [CPF blog article](#) highlighting the personal and global impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the worldwide need for vaccine equity. Nearly a year later, we are now entering what some describe as a new, "post-Covid" paradigm. But what has really changed, and what hasn't?

If the recent news cycles are any indication, our priorities do appear to be shifting. The divisive events of our country's anti-vax protests this winter are already being relegated further down our news feeds and social media alerts. Changes in COVID-19 numbers in Canada and abroad continue to be announced, but with less frequency and fanfare.

This is all understandable, given major world events such as the invasion in Ukraine presently dominating the news; however, we cannot lose sight of the present and continuing impact of COVID-19 within our own country and on the global stage.

In March of this year, we conducted an informal survey with some of our close global partners within the Besroux Centre. We wanted to check in on the COVID-19 response in their countries and, given last month's anti-vax protests in Canada, we were curious to see if this was a trend reflected outside of our borders.

In keeping with [existing data](#), our partners in Canada and Australia reported higher vaccination rates (74.7-81.7% receiving at least two doses), our South American/Caribbean partners reported a wide variance (2.1-90%) and African partners reported generally lower rates (15-61%).

There were also regional differences in the reasons for individuals not getting vaccinated. Canadian, Australian, and South American partners reported the primary factor as vaccine hesitancy due fear of side effects, while our African colleagues cited vaccine distribution challenges. Interestingly, our Canadian partners were the only ones to report "multiple and very disruptive" anti-vaccination protests in their country.

While our survey was small and informal, the responses suggest that the post-COVID world varies considerably depending on resources, infrastructure and [cultural/political context](#). On point, third party data at time of writing confirms that only 15% of people in low-income countries have received even one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

The CFPC's Besroux Centre for Global Family Medicine (BCGFM) is collaborating with its global partners to address these ongoing challenges. Notably, we are investigating the impact of primary care providers on global vaccination rates through the [FM Vax study](#). In Canada, family

physicians were generally not central to the rollout of vaccination campaigns unlike other countries with much more integrated public health and primary care systems. In Canada, we have robust primary care and public health systems, but they arguably do not work closely together, a problematic reality as we vacillate between acute and chronic phases of this, or any, health crisis.

The BCGFM is also responding to the pandemic through educational activities focusing on collaborative learning - sharing knowledge and experience from different global contexts, which in kind can be applied or adapted at home. Through our [FM Pivot platform](#) we have launched two online educational modules applying "lessons learned" from the pandemic towards research planning and chronic disease management in future global health emergencies. Further modules in mental health, medical education and disaster planning are planned for later this year.

As we move into our new "post-COVID" paradigm, we must remember that COVID-19 remains a real and present global challenge. We must continue to advocate for [universal access to vaccines](#), and provide support to those countries that require assistance in vaccine distribution. It is not just a social justice issue but an urgent global public health one. Until we achieve some degree of herd immunity around the world, variants will continue to circulate.

Viruses, or any global health emergencies now and in the future, know no borders in our modern world.

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Links:

<https://www.cfp.ca/news/2021/07/06/07-06>

https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations?country=OWID_WRL

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2022/01/14/1072188527/for-the-36-countries-with-the-lowest-vaccination-rates-supply-isnt-the-only-issu>

[News & Current Projects | The College of Family Physicians of Canada \(cfpc.ca\)](#)

<https://fmpivot.ca/>

<https://www.bmj.com/content/376/bmj-2022-070650>