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To: gphin / rmisp (PHAC/ASPC)
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Good morning,

Please find below the daily Summary and articles collected by GPHIN for your review and risk assessment.

GPHIN Daily Report Email Summary

Special Section on Coronavirus

[Canada \(Update\) - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Outbreak \(Official\)](#)

As of 29 October 2020 at 19:02 EDT, a total of 228,542 cases have been recorded in Canada including 10,074 deaths. The cases are reported in Newfoundland and Labrador (291 confirmed cases, 4 deaths), Prince Edward Island (64 confirmed cases), Nova Scotia (1,102 confirmed cases, 65 deaths), New Brunswick (341 confirmed cases, 6 deaths), Quebec (103,844 confirmed cases, 6,214 deaths), Ontario (73,819 confirmed cases, 3,118 deaths), Manitoba (4,894 confirmed cases, 62 deaths), Saskatchewan (2,990 confirmed cases, 25 deaths), Alberta (27,042 confirmed cases, 318 deaths), British Columbia (14,109 confirmed cases, 262 deaths), Yukon (23 confirmed cases), Northwest Territories (10 confirmed cases), Nunavut (0 confirmed case), and repatriated travellers (13 confirmed cases). A detailed [epidemiological summary](#) is available. The risk will vary between and within communities, but given the increasing number of cases in Canada, the risk to Canadians is considered [high](#).

[International \(Update\) - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Outbreak \(Media\)](#)

As of 30 October 2020, 10:21 GMT, there were 45,425,176 cases of COVID-19 and 1,187,549 deaths reported globally. Top 10 countries with the highest number of cases, by alphabetical order are: Argentina (1,143,800 cases, 30,442 deaths), Brazil (5,496,402 cases, 159,033 deaths); Colombia (1,053,122 cases, 30,926 deaths); France (1,282,769 cases, 36,020 deaths); India 8,089,593 cases, 121,144 deaths); Mexico (912,811 cases, 90,773 deaths); Russia (1,599,976 cases, 27,656 deaths); Spain (1,238,922 cases, 35,639 deaths); United Kingdom (965,340 cases, 45,955 deaths); United States (9,214,994 cases, 234,201 deaths).

Canada – Coronavirus disease (COVID -19) (Official and Media)

- [One Manitoba First Nation community has moved to Code Orange restrictions](#). Sagkeeng First Nation announced on 26 October that it will be closing down the community for a 14-day period due to the growing number of COVID-19 cases across Manitoba. According to a public notice from the First Nation, Code Orange means community transmission of COVID-19 is at a medium level; new clusters are forming, but they can be controlled through self-isolation, testing and contact tracing; and the healthcare system can manage the case levels. The chief and council of Sagkeeng will re-evaluate the community closure on 9 November.
- [York Region Public Health states, 44 confirmed cases of COVID-19 are linked to a large wedding in Vaughan that took place over two days](#). In a news release, the public health unit stated slightly more than 100 people attended the wedding at the Avani Event Centre in its Opus Room with wedding-related events on 14 October and 18 October. York Region Public Health was notified of the first confirmed case on 26 October. Five of the cases are York Region residents, while 39 of the cases involve people outside the region. The public health unit stated, 31 cases are in Peel Region, two are in Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph, one is in the Simcoe Muskoka District, two are in Halton Region, one is Waterloo, and one is in Toronto. The exposure risk to wedding guests is considered high. Everyone who attended is advised to go into isolation for two weeks until 2 November. The public health unit stated the cluster of cases is the second large cluster linked to a wedding in York Region. York Region Public Health has conducted an inspection of the venue and is assessing next steps based on its investigation. The banquet facilities were still under certain restrictions as part of Stage 3 reopening when the events took place.
- [EU Countries have started closing their doors to Canadian travelers upon Council's recommendation](#). Immediately after the European Union Council updated its [list of epidemiologically safe third-countries](#), the residents of which are permitted to enter the European Union, removing Canada from it, the Member States have followed updating their own lists. Countries as Germany and Denmark have already removed Canadians as

travellers eligible to enter their territory restriction-free, announcing the move through decisions published by the relevant Ministries. Estonia has also updated its list removing Canadians.

- The [latest modelling shows the province of Ontario appears to be moving away from the worst-case scenario](#) as the second wave continues to take hold, and is expected to settle into a range of 800 to 1,200 new daily cases for the next several weeks. The projections also show a slower growth in the hospitalization rate and a use of intensive care beds that is much more within the realm or the limits of the health system.
- A [Montreal health agency has been forced off-line as authorities deal with a cyberattack](#). The Quebec Health Minister has reported that specific attacks hit systems at the regional health agency covering west-central Montreal, which oversees the Jewish General Hospital among other facilities. As a preventive measure, internet connectivity as well as external and remote access to networks have been suspended.
- According to Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, [runny nose and sore throat are being removed from Alberta's symptom checklist that required people under 18 to self isolate](#). The official states that these symptoms are being removed because there is little evidence to suggest they are indicators of COVID-19.
- The Transport Minister has stated that [big cruise ships will be banned from Canadian waters at least until the end of February 2021](#). The same extension is being applied to the ban on smaller vessels carrying 12 or more passengers in Arctic coastal waters.

United States - Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (Official and Media)

- [A new way to measure respiratory rate, heart rate and heart rate variability has recently been developed in a collaboration led by the University of Michigan](#). Together with body temperature, these important indicators could identify a respiratory infection early before a worker or student feels ill. The technology, which was recently issued a U.S. patent, is particularly relevant to detecting illnesses such as the flu and COVID-19, but it can also be used to detect stress and other physiological conditions. In keeping with social distancing, the system can perform the health screening on masked participants from beyond six feet away. The new software can be deployed in a stand-alone device or in systems that include a time-of-flight camera, such as the latest flagship smartphones from Apple, Samsung and LG. Early detection of COVID-19 during the asymptomatic period is important since people can be infectious and spread the virus without the outward signs of cough, temperature rise, or shortness of breath. Studies performed on influenza from 2010 to 2020 showed that the combination of heart rate, respiratory rate and temperature improves the accuracy of predicting illness by 42% compared to temperature alone.
- [The first case of someone testing positive for both COVID-19 and the flu at the same time has been reported in Solano County, California](#). The only public identifying information regarding the patient is that they are under the age of 65.

International - Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Outbreak and Outcomes (Media)

- [According to a top public health researcher](#), the possibility the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei province, was caused by imported seafood contaminated with novel coronavirus cannot be ruled out. Although the earliest cases in Wuhan were linked to a seafood market in the city, experts have noted that did not prove the virus originated in the market. In a report published on 29 October by chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention states, since COVID-19 outbreaks in recent months in Beijing and the port cities of Dalian, Liaoning province, and Qingdao, Shandong province, were caused by imported seafood, people should think about new approaches to tracing the earliest COVID-19 cases linked to the seafood market in Wuhan. Earlier in October 2020, China CDC announced it had isolated live novel coronavirus from a package containing imported frozen cod when tracing a COVID-19 outbreak in Qingdao, which proved the virus could survive in cold chain storage over long distances and infect humans.
- [A vaccine scheme co-led by the WHO is setting up a compensation fund for people in poor nations who might suffer any side-effects from COVID-19 vaccines](#), aiming to allay fears that could hamper a global rollout of shots. The mechanism is meant to avoid a repetition of delays experienced a decade ago during the H1N1 swine flu pandemic, when inoculations were slowed down in dozens of low-income countries because there was no clear liability. The promoters of the COVAX vaccine facility, which is co-led by the WHO, are setting up the scheme and GAVI, a global vaccine alliance, according to a COVAX document published on 29 October. COVAX aims to distribute at least 2 billion effective shots around the world by the end of next year. The scheme could foot the bill for 92 low-income countries, mostly in Africa and South-East Asia, meaning their governments would face little or no costs from claims brought by patients, should anything go unexpectedly wrong after a COVAX-distributed vaccine is administered. However dozens of middle-income countries, such as South Africa, Lebanon, Gabon, Iran and most Latin American states, would not be offered this protection.
- [Germany could be one of the first Western countries to start immunizing people against Covid-19 under a plan being rolled out by the government and a German company that is testing a vaccine](#). The plan is for doses of the vaccine now being held in central storage in Germany to be shipped to more than 60 regional vaccination centers within hours of the substance being approved.

- [Russia has temporarily stopped vaccinating new volunteers in its COVID-19 vaccine trial due to high demand and a shortage of doses.](#) According to provisional information, vaccinations will restart by around 10 November. The shortage of doses is the latest challenge to Moscow's ambitious and unorthodox vaccine plan, which has seen the government give regulatory go-ahead for the shot and launch the mass inoculation of the general public before full tests for safety and efficacy were complete.

Studies Related to Coronavirus disease (COVID -19) Outbreak (Media)

- [According to figures from Irelands Department of Education](#), staff working in schools for children with special educational needs are more likely to contract Covid-19 compared to those working in mainstream schools. The data, which breaks down incidences of the virus recorded in a school setting according to age, shows that almost half of cases, 46%, diagnosed in special schools are among staff. The percentage is much lower in mainstream primary schools with 12.5% of cases occurring in staff.
- [A new public health data visualisation dashboard for COVID-19 has revealed significant issues regarding the quality](#), consistency and availability of reliable data needed to manage the coronavirus pandemic and its impacts. Developed by researchers at UCL-led interdisciplinary research collaboration i-sense, the dashboard highlights significant gaps in both data quality and availability. Placed in the context of total number of estimated infections, the proportion of cases whose contacts are asked to isolate is small. Further, no routine data are collected on how well requests for 14-day isolation are adhered to. This makes it impossible to currently assess how effective NHS Test and Trace is in reducing COVID-19 transmission. Made available to the public, the i-sense COVID Response Evaluation Dashboard (COVID RED) collates and presents data from the Office of National Statistics, Public Health England, and the NHS under five categories; Find, Test, Track, Isolate and Support for those asked to Isolate (FTTIS). It presents indicators of England's performance under each of these headings, and identifies areas where more data are needed. Bringing together COVID-19 data from a wide range of sources into one programme, COVID RED is currently the only dashboard that explores the system as a whole, with the additional function of 'isolation' and 'support' status. This is in regard to the importance of these steps in ensuring optimal performance of the whole response system.
- [Raccoon dogs might have been intermediate hosts for severe acute respiratory syndrome-associated coronavirus in 2002–2004.](#) In a study published in the Emerging Infectious Diseases journal on 29 October 2020, researchers demonstrated susceptibility of raccoon dogs to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 infection and transmission to in-contact animals. Infected animals had no signs of illness. Virus replication and tissue lesions occurred in the nasal conchae. According to the study, increasing evidence supports the potential of carnivore species, including farmed fur animals, to become infected by SARS-CoV-2. [This transmission could eventually cause zoonotic infections in humans \(unpublished data\)](#). The results indicate that affected farms might be reservoirs for SARS-CoV-2. Thus, efficient and continuous surveillance should target susceptible animals, including raccoon dogs, especially in China, which is a key player in global fur production. The authors stress also the need to initiate large-scale epidemiologic field studies with historic samples that might elucidate the role of farmed animals in the current pandemic.
- [While there is no evidence yet that the virus invades the brain](#), new work by scientists at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University shows that the spike proteins that extrude from SARS-CoV-2 promote inflammatory responses on the endothelial cells that form the blood-brain barrier. The study, published in the December print issue of the journal *Neurobiology of Disease*, is the first to show that SARS-CoV-2 spike proteins can cause this barrier to become leaky, potentially disrupting the delicate neural networks within the brain.
- [According to a German study](#), facemasks and limits on numbers are important, but good ventilation technology is the most essential ingredient of all in reducing the risk of the coronavirus spreading at public events indoors. The researchers note the study's results have implications for containing the epidemic among the broader population too. The study also found that reducing venue capacity, having multiple arena entrances and seating spectators could have a major impact on the number of contacts people accumulate. Its recommendations include only allowing food to be eaten at seats, open-air waiting areas, and mask wearing for the concert's duration and employing stewards to make sure people stick to hygiene rules. Researchers also developed an epidemiological model to analyse the impact of staging an event on the spread of the virus among the broader population. The researchers found, hygiene measures such as mask wearing and social distancing should remain in place as long as the pandemic persists, while seating plans and number of guests should be adjusted based on the incidence of the virus.
- According to the findings of a new study [a variant of the coronavirus that is believed to have originated in Spain has spread across Europe and now accounts for most of the new cases reported in several countries in the region](#). A new variant of the coronavirus, identified as 20A.EU1 by researchers from Switzerland and Spain, was first observed in Spain in June. It has been recorded in Spain at frequencies of above 40% since July. Elsewhere, the new variant of the coronavirus has increased from very low values prior to 15 July to 40%. It was also found to be prevalent in Norway, Latvia, the Netherlands, and France.
- [A Russian professor who in an experiment infected himself with Covid-19 to become ill with the virus for a second time reports hopes for herd immunity are overblown](#). The scientist and his team at the Institute of Clinical and

Experimental Medicine in Novosibirsk launched a study into coronavirus antibodies. The researchers studied the way antibodies behaved, how strong they were, and how long they stayed in the body' and found they decrease rapidly. The scientist initially caught the virus for the first time in February while on a flight from France to Novosibirsk with a stopover in Moscow, but was able to recover back home in Siberia without hospitalization. After recovery and by the end of the third month the antibodies were no longer detected. As an experiment, the scientist deliberately exposed himself to COVID-19 patients wearing no protection and became sick again. The second infection was far more serious and he was hospitalised. The scientist's conclusion, based on his own case, is that collective or herd immunity is a forlorn hope. The virus is here to stay, and while vaccines may give immunity this is likely to be temporary.

- [A study conducted in the United States revealed that a simple dose of aspirin can reduce the risk of serious coronavirus-related complications](#), with a Turkish expert stating that the drug has already been in use in Turkey since the beginning of the outbreak in March. A significant factor in COVID-19 related deaths is the virus' impact on cells in the inner surface of veins that lead to blood clotting. Blood clots block thinner veins and this in turn blocks vital supplies to organs, eventually leading to lung failure or heart attacks. The study showed aspirin prevents this.
- [A study by the Indian Council of Medical Research \(ICMR\) has found that the BCG vaccine enhanced innate and adaptive components of the immune system](#), including memory elements, bolstering evidence for arguments that this familiar vaccine could be tool against Covid-19. Scientists at the ICMR have cautioned that whether their findings translate into protective immunity against SARS-COV-2 is yet to be determined.
- [A new study published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism finds that more than 80% of over 200 COVID-19 patients at the Hospital Universitario Marqués de Valdecilla in Spain had vitamin D deficiency](#). Out of that group of patients, men had lower vitamin D levels than women. The study also found that patients with lower vitamin D levels had raised serum levels of inflammatory markers like ferritin, a blood protein that contains iron, and troponin, a complex of proteins found in skeletal and heart muscles. Troponin tests measure cardiac-specific troponin in the blood to identify heart injuries. The findings also reveal that vitamin D-deficient COVID-19 patients had a greater prevalence of hypertension and cardiovascular disease and also ended up having longer hospital stays than patients not deficient in the vitamin.
- [Researchers in the UK have conducted a study showing that a high proportion of patients admitted to intensive care units \(ICU\) with coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) acquire a secondary bacterial co-infection during their hospital stay](#). The retrospective cohort study of patients admitted to seven ICUs in England up to 18 May 2020 found that the longer the ICU stay, the more significant the proportion of patients who developed nosocomial (hospital-acquired) infections. While bacterial co-infection within 48 hours of ICU admission was uncommon, the proportion of pathogens detected started to increase after 48 hours. The pathogens mostly consisted of Gram-negative bacteria, particularly Klebsiella pneumoniae and Escherichia coli. Patients who developed these infections were significantly more likely to die in ICU than those without co-infections. The researchers report the finding that co-infection among COVID-19 patients is uncommon early on during hospitalization supports the recommendations that empirical antibiotics should not be used at the point of admission unless a bacterial infection is suspected.
- [A new study published by Elsevier, has found that certain continuing symptoms may indicate that a fully recovered patient will still test positive for the novel coronavirus](#). The research itself originates from Italy, where researchers with Fondazione Policlinico Universitario found that a notable number of fully recovered COVID-19 patients were likely to test positive for the virus a second time. The second positive test was particularly linked to recovered patients who continued to have some respiratory symptoms, most notably a sore throat and runny nose. [The findings](#) were based on data from 131 COVID-19 patients who had met WHO's criteria for ending their quarantine, including being fever-free for at least three days, having gone at least a week without symptoms, and more. Many of the recovered patients, including ones who didn't test positive a second time, had persistent health issues like fatigue, coughing, and trouble breathing. The big mystery here involves the fact that some of the symptom-free and fully recovered COVID-19 patients who are no longer in quarantine may still be carrying the virus.
- According to research conducted at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and published in the journal *Science*, [the vast majority of individuals infected with mild-to-moderate COVID 19 mount a robust antibody response that is relatively stable for at least five months](#). Additionally, the research team found that this antibody response correlates with the body's ability to neutralize (kill) SARS-CoV-2.
- [Eli Lilly & Co's coronavirus antibody treatment can almost completely reduce viral loads in COVID-19 patients to zero and lowers the risk of hospitalization](#). Researchers found that mildly and moderately ill patients given a high dose of the antibody, LY-CoV555 (also known as bamlanivimab), had viral loads that were 3.4 times lower than those who received a placebo. Additionally, those who received any dose of LY-CoV555 were four times less likely to need to be hospitalized.

- [In a recent study, Scientists have discovered a new Covid-toes skin symptom](#) which people may end up developing when infected with the virus. Research by the International League of Dermatological Societies and the American Academy of Dermatology found some patients had chilblain-like inflammation on their feet, sometimes lasting for months at a time. The condition typically develops within a week to four weeks of developing coronavirus and can result in toes becoming swollen or changing colour. Symptoms are reported to be mild in the majority of cases and the feet return to normal within weeks.

Domestic Events of Interest

[Canada - COVID-19 paused plan to equip Guelph public schools with naloxone \(Media\)](#)

Guelph's public school board states a plan to equip its buildings with the overdose-reversing drug naloxone is moving forward after it was paused due to COVID-19. Back in January, trustees with the Upper Grand District School Board voted in favour of implementing the use of the nasal spray as part of its first aid protocols. Due to the school closures in March and work required to reopen them in September, the plans were put on hold. Trustees were told this week that things are moving ahead once again, beginning with virtual training for staff. Once that is completed, all schools and board offices will be supplied with naloxone kits to be stored in the box that holds the defibrillators. A committee formed to research the idea of naloxone kits in schools argued that similar to defibrillators, the inclusion of naloxone is a proactive response. One that is not just for students and staff, but visitors and those who use school facilities after-hours. A report showed that schools are not considered high-risk areas for opioid overdoses, but there are concerning trends within the community. The kits will be installed at all 76 schools as well as the board office in Guelph on Victoria Road. A total of 520 staff members are expected to be provided training on naloxone. The initial cost is pegged at \$29,276 and naloxone has a shelf life of two years. The cost to replace the kits would be an ongoing budget consideration. Naloxone can temporarily reverse the effects of an overdose, but will not cause harm to someone if given in error.

International Events of Interest

[United States - Joint Cybersecurity Advisory: Ransomware Activity Targeting the Healthcare and Public Health Sector \(Official\)](#)

On 28 October, a joint cybersecurity advisory was coauthored by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This advisory describes the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) used by cybercriminals against targets in the Healthcare and Public Health Sector (HPH) to infect systems with Ryuk ransomware for financial gain. CISA, FBI, and HHS have credible information of an increased and imminent cybercrime threat to U.S. hospitals and healthcare providers. CISA, FBI, and HHS are sharing this information to provide warning to healthcare providers to ensure that they take timely and reasonable precautions to protect their networks from these threats. CISA, FBI, and HHS assess malicious cyber actors are targeting the HPH Sector with Trickbot malware, often leading to ransomware attacks, data theft, and the disruption of healthcare services. These issues will be particularly challenging for organizations within the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, administrators will need to balance this risk when determining their cybersecurity investments.

[United States - Fentanyl disguised as prescription meds; Rhode Island issues warning about counterfeit lookalike pills \(Media\)](#)

Rhode Island authorities are warning of fake pills that may look like prescription drugs but are actually full of the dangerous and potent fentanyl. On 28 October, the Rhode Island Department of Health tweeted that some counterfeit, or fake, pills are made to look like prescription opioids & benzodiazepines. They are unsafe and can contain unknown amounts of illegally made fentanyl. One pill can cause a fatal overdose. Benzodiazepines are more commonly known by the drug's brand names, which include Valium and Xanax.

[Hong Kong - CHP investigates case of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus \(Official\)](#)

On 29 October, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is investigating a case of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus (HEV) and urged members of the public to be vigilant against hepatitis E infection and to strictly observe good personal, food and environmental hygiene.

The case involves a 78-year-old woman with underlying illnesses. The patient is now in stable condition and her blood sample tested positive for rat HEV upon laboratory testing. The patient did not have contact with rodents or rats, and had no travel history during the incubation period. Based on the available epidemiological information, the source and the route of infection could not be determined. The CHP's investigation is ongoing. The exact mode of transmission of rat HEV to humans is unknown at the moment. Possible routes of transmission include ingestion of food or water contaminated by rodents or their excreta, exposure to environments or objects contaminated by rodents or their excreta and direct contact with rodents or their excreta. The usual HEV causing human infection is transmitted mainly through the faecal-oral route.

[South Korea - S. Korea Raises Guard Against Highly Pathogenic Bird Flu \(Media\)](#)

South Korea stated on 28 October that it has bolstered measures to prevent the spread of avian influenza (AI) from wild birds to local poultry farms as the country reported yet another outbreak near Seoul. The move came after two outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian flu in Yongin, just south of Seoul, and the neighboring city of Cheonan in the past four days, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, food and Rural Affairs. It marked the first outbreak of the highly pathogenic avian virus in South Korea since the H5N6 strain of avian flu reported in the nearby Asan region in February 2018. South Korea is also investigating another case from Yangju, north of Seoul. Quarantine officials launched investigations at 10 major habitats for migratory birds around the area where the two confirmed AI cases were discovered. Smaller poultry farms in the region are banned from selling or buying birds in line with efforts to prevent the spread of the disease. Separately, South Korea has been grappling with new African swine fever (ASF) cases in the country as well. Authorities confirmed two ASF cases from Gangwon Province earlier in October, marking the first outbreak of the animal disease since October 2019. Although no additional cases were reported from local farms since, the ministry remains vigilant, as the virus can spread again at anytime through wild boars or other animals. The ministry stated it is investigating 1,245 farms of Gyeonggi and Gangwon Provinces on a daily basis.

Researches, Policies and Guidelines

[United States - Young people 5 times more likely to catch COVID-19 if they vape \(Study\)](#)

According to data collected in the US, young people are 5 times more likely to catch COVID-19 if they vape. The study surveyed over 4,000 young people about their vaping habits and whether they've been diagnosed with COVID-19 or had symptoms. Among the findings, young people between 13-24 who regularly vape, were five times more likely to get a COVID-19 diagnosis than non-vaping young people. Vaping increases the chances of COVID-19 through damage done to the lungs, and increased touching of the face. While e-cigarette use declined in 2020 compared to 2019, about 3.6 million young people reported current e-cigarette use in September, according to a National Youth Tobacco Use survey. The ongoing e-cigarette epidemic among U.S. youth contributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic nationally, the study published in the [Journal of Adolescent Health](#) concluded. Out of 4,351 people surveyed in May, ages 13-24, e-cigarette users were five times more likely to be infected with COVID-19, while those who used both e-cigarettes and cigarettes were seven times more likely to be infected. Heightened exposure to nicotine and other chemicals affects lung function, and smoking or vaping involves the user touching his or her face frequently, increasing the chances of COVID-19 infection, the study noted. Smokers and e-cigarette users may cough more frequently or share vaping devices or cigarettes, increasing the chance of COVID-19 transmission if they are already infected. The findings from a national sample of adolescents and young adults show that e-cigarette use and dual use of e-cigarettes and cigarettes are significant underlying risk factors for COVID-19 that has previously not been shown, the study notes.

[WHO - Young people and digital health interventions: working together to design better \(Official\)](#)

WHO and partners launch new guidance on designing digital health interventions with and for young people. [Youth-centred digital health interventions](#) is a new framework developed by WHO, HRP, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA. It provides guidance on effective planning, development and implementation of digital solutions with and for young people to address the [many health challenges](#) they may face as they grow into adulthood. The 2019 WHO [Guideline for recommendations on digital interventions for health system strengthening](#) advises that digital health interventions adapt the way they transmit information to specific audiences in order to improve the health and well-being of the people they were designed to reach. This is critical when working with young people, who [still encounter considerable resistance](#) to being viewed as equal and valuable partners in programme design and delivery. This is true even when it comes to programmes, strategies, policies, funding mechanisms and organizations that directly affect their lives. The new framework includes a list of "do's and don'ts" for engaging young people in the process of digital health design and delivery, based on consultation with young social media influencers, health content and intervention developers, health advocates, educators, and current or future health professionals. Aligning with a growing body of WHO digital health guidance, the new framework builds on important lessons learned from the first generation of youth-focused digital health interventions.

[International - More pandemics coming if environmental issues not dealt with: report \(Media\)](#)

An international group of scientists has concluded pandemic problems are just starting unless the world moves to deal with the issues creating them. A British expert on disease ecology and head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services states that the factors driving pandemics are human activities, unsustainable growth in livestock production, deforestation, the wildlife trade and global connectivity. The panel, which has 137 member nations, commissioned a report into the environmental roots of pandemics and new diseases including AIDS, H1N1, SARS, Ebola and COVID-19. The authors of the peer-reviewed report drew on the findings of more than 700 journal articles about a third published in the last year. The report states, pandemics are becoming more frequent, driven by a continued rise in the underlying emerging disease events that spark them. Pandemic risk could be significantly lowered

by promoting responsible consumption and reducing unsustainable consumption. The panel found about a third of the new diseases result from land-use changes, agricultural expansion and urbanization. The report concludes, it is no longer good enough to wait for pandemics to emerge and rely on a medical response. It points to research that is starting to be able to predict where future pandemics will arise, which animals will host the virus and the environmental and economic changes that drive them. The report calls for reform in how land-use changes are funded to account for biological risks. Habitat conservation should be stepped up. People in viral hotspots need education about potential risks. Animals most likely to host dangerous viruses should be blocked from the wildlife trade, which also needs higher safety and cleanliness standards. Government policies should discourage consumption of products that drive deforestation and habitat loss.

Best Regards | Sincères salutations
The GPHIN Team / L'équipe du RMISP

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