

## **Exton, Adam (HC/SC)**

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**From:** Leroux, Jean-Francois (HC/SC)  
**Sent:** 2020-07-30 3:47 PM  
**To:** Nowers, Kathryn (HC/SC); Webster, Lhori (HC/SC)  
**Subject:** CIHR funded projects - Vaccine Hesitancy

Hi Lhori and Kathryn,

In follow-up to the MinDM discussions this week, we wanted to share with you an overview of projects in the area of vaccine hesitancy that were funded by CIHR recently through the rapid research response on COVID. We also highlighted the work of the Canadian Immunization Research Network (CIRN) that are also conducting work in this area.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

JF

### **CIRN:**

The Canadian Immunization Research Network (CIRN)'s Social Sciences and Humanities Network (CIRN-SSH) focuses on vaccine acceptance and vaccine hesitancy, and works by linking social scientists and humanities researchers across Canada to examine the ethical, legal, and social implications of vaccine programs. SSHN has recently conducted nine interdisciplinary research projects on vaccine hesitancy. The proposed research builds on findings from this previous work and collaborations formed as a direct result of previous SSHN/CIRN work. SSHN has more than twenty university- and hospital-based members who are among the leaders in Canada and internationally in cultural, psychosocial and public health research related to vaccine hesitancy; this membership will be involved in the knowledge translation strategy. In addition, SSHN has contacts at the WHO with whom they have previously worked on a study of the legal underpinnings of National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups. Mobilizing the CIRN rapid response research mechanism to leverage this Network's existing capacity and readiness will allow for vital research and analysis to be conducted without delay.

### **For the Directed Grant to CIRN for Rapid Response Research –COVID-19 Legal Frameworks for Vaccination Research Rapid Response Funding Opportunity:**

The proposed study will provide a better understanding of immunization regulation in Canada in both routine and responsive (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic) contexts, which will help to inform Canada's approach to potential COVID-19 vaccines. The outputs of the proposed research will make important contributions to the knowledge base that will, among other objectives, enable provinces and territories to make informed decisions on policies and programs once a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available.

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to better understand the laws and regulations for vaccination that exist across Canada in order to determine whether they support or impede the achievement of vaccination program goals and objectives in both routine and emergency contexts, including the current COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the study will examine the specific issues of mandatory vaccination and compensation for serious events following vaccination, which are of particular relevance for potential COVID-19 vaccine(s).

The proposal will address **ALL** of the following objectives:

- Survey at least 7 Canadian provincial and territorial jurisdictions and create a national map of governance frameworks (e.g., key actors, policies, laws, regulations) and any planned or potential changes resulting from COVID-19 vaccination planning;
- assess provincial and territorial frameworks to facilitate insights into: (a) the commonalities and discrepancies between frameworks; (b) the extent to which, and how, the frameworks address mandates, compensation, and emergency situations; and (c) whether these frameworks encourage health care worker and public trust in vaccination programs and vaccines.
- undertake the following in relation to the specific issues of mandatory vaccination and compensation for serious adverse events following vaccination, both of which will be essential as potential COVID-19 vaccine(s) are rolled out: (a) a preliminary examination and comparison of how select Canadian frameworks approach these two critical issues; and (b) a preliminary case study of how select Canadian approaches contrast with relevant select foreign jurisdictions, and.
- propose areas for consideration for revisions to the regulation of vaccination in Canada, including routine and responsive vaccination goals.

From a quick search of the Round 1 and 2 competitions:

### **Round 1:**

#### ***Social dynamics, communications, and trust*** **13 projects, \$4.68M**

Projects under this sub-area include a primary focus on risk perception and communication, misinformation, and trust. Specific examples include:

- How trust and risk perception shapes public responses to COVID-19;
- Understanding and countering misinformation, stigma, and fear through, for example social strategies and policy responses;
- Studies of discrimination, racism, and social cohesion; and,
- Analyses of media and social media information.
- Examining outbreak management strategies for general public and targeted communities, including vulnerable populations, immigrants and Indigenous peoples

Including:

Eve Dube (U Laval)

Sociocultural and behavioral factors affecting communities' response to countermeasures of COVID-19 epidemic:

Identifying interventions to build trust. (\$499,089)

Abstract: 'Fear might be a bigger threat than the virus.' As public health authorities increase efforts to address the new coronavirus epidemic (COVID-19), rumours, misinformation, and xenophobic online posts are spreading faster than the virus. Fear and misinformation have direct implication on the implementation of effective public health measures to control the epidemic. With this research, we will examine the individual and sociocultural factors that impact individual's and communities' adoption of public health recommendations. This study will use qualitative and quantitative methods to describe online discourses related to COVID-19 in Canada (Tweets and comments on news media report) and to describe individual/ community understanding of disease, priorities, fears, etc. including public health messaging that may impact the acceptance of measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. We will also identify interventions that will help build public trust in authorities responsible for disease spread and management, while dispelling unfounded rumours and xenophobic discourse.

### **Round 2**

Shannon MacDonald, U Alberta

Vaccination in a pandemic: The impact on routine vaccinations and future COVID-19 vaccine acceptance

Abstract: Canadians are asking: During the pandemic, should my children or myself receive our regular vaccines? Is it safe to go to my vaccination appointment? Could COVID-19 make me seriously ill? Will new COVID-19 vaccines be safe, since they are being made so quickly? Will there be enough COVID-19 vaccines for everyone? Like everyone else in the world, Canadians face many concerns about COVID-19, and Canadian health care systems are grappling with the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic. Physical distancing measures that have been put in place to reduce spread of COVID-19 have led to challenges in providing, and accessing, routine vaccines for all ages, such as those for measles or meningitis. At the same time, one of the primary options for containment of the pandemic is through future COVID-19 vaccines. However, public acceptance of COVID-19 vaccines is already being questioned in the media, and initial vaccine shortages will require prioritization of who receives the vaccine first. An understanding of Canadians' acceptance of future vaccines and their perspectives on vaccine prioritization will be critical before vaccines are rolled-out. The aim of this project is to support the public health system in these tasks. We will begin by assessing how provincial and territorial health systems are delivering routine vaccinations during the pandemic, examining what the public think about routine vaccines during this time, and then measuring whether less/more people are getting vaccinated with routine vaccines during the pandemic. Second, since population support for a vaccination program is critical to its success, we will examine public acceptability of new COVID-19 vaccines and the determinants of acceptability. The project will provide Canada's public health system with essential information to organize the distribution of routine vaccines during the pandemic and to prepare for the inevitable COVID-19 mass vaccination program that is on the horizon.

**In 2015 there was a Best Brains Exchange:**

Best Brains Exchange: 'Achievement of Optimal Vaccine Coverage Rates in Canada: Identifying and Addressing the Problem of Vaccine Hesitancy', February 3, 2015, Ottawa.