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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 27 October 2020 at 19:00 EDT, a total of 222,887 cases have been recorded in Canada including 10,001 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 (334 confirmed cases, 6 deaths), Quebec (101,885 confirmed cases, 6,172 deaths), Ontario (72,051 confirmed cases, 3,103 deaths), Manitoba (4,532 confirmed cases, 58 deaths), Saskatchewan (2,841 confirmed cases, 25 deaths), Alberta (26,155 confirmed cases, 309 deaths), British Columbia (13,588 confirmed cases, 259 deaths), Yukon (22 confirmed cases), Northwest Territories (9 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 28 October 2020, 12:13 GMT, there were 44,354,131 cases of COVID-19 and 1,173,783 deaths reported globally. Top 10 countries with the highest number of cases, by alphabetical order are: Argentina (1,116,609 cases, 29,730 deaths), Brazil (5,440,903 cases, 157,981 deaths); Colombia (1,033,218 cases, 30,565 deaths); France (1,198,695 cases, 35,541 deaths); India (7,990,322 cases, 120,054 deaths); Mexico (901,298 cases, 89,814 deaths); United Kingdom (917,575 cases, 45,365 deaths); Russia (1,563,976 cases, 29,935 deaths); Spain (1,174,916 cases, 35,298 deaths); United States (9,039,170 cases, 232,101 deaths).

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

- [The COVID-19 ward at Toronto Western Hospital has temporarily closed to new admissions, and is being relocated to a new floor in an attempt to get an outbreak under control.](#) It is the sixth outbreak since April for the Dundas and Bathurst hospital, with 38 patients and 68 staff infected overall. The unit, on the eighth floor, is adjacent to another unit where patients without COVID were being treated for general medical problems that do not require surgery. So far, three of them have been infected, along with seven staff members. An eighth staff member tested positive 26 October, but according to the medical director of infection prevention and control at the University Health Network, it is not clear yet if they are connected to the outbreak.
- [Chatham-Kent Public Health affirms that about 150 people have been told to get a COVID-19 test after a confirmed case in a staff who worked at a recent Canadian Blood Services mobile donor event.](#) The Health Unit has been working on contact tracing, with help from Canadian Blood Services. Mass email was sent out on 23 October 2020, a follow up phone calls were organized for 24 October. The contacts were advised to get tested the week of 26 October. Collections events scheduled for 24-26 October in the Chatham-Kent and Windsor areas have been cancelled due to resource constraints.
- [Prime Minister affirms that feds will provide COVID-19 docs, but will be mindful of sensitive info 'risk'.](#) The government will turn over “as much information as possible,” to the House of Commons Health Committee that is beginning a Conservative-prompted study into the COVID-19 response so far, but there will be a limit on how much will be released. The motion summoning the Committee to begin a deep investigation into the federal government’s pandemic response and progress on testing, procurements and vaccines on 26 October. On 27 October 2020, the Prime Minister indicated that the government is learning daily about the virus, and there are “absolutely” things he wishes were handled differently, but that those lessons are already informing the country’s response to the second resurgence of the novel coronavirus.

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

- On 26 October 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated [COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination](#). Travelers Prohibited from Entry to the United States: With specific exceptions, foreign nationals who have been in any of the following countries during the past 14 days may not enter the United States: [China](#); [Iran](#); [Most European Countries](#) (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Monaco, San Marino, Vatican City); [United Kingdom](#) (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland); [Republic of Ireland](#); and [Brazil](#). **Level 3:** COVID-19 Risk Is High – Please refer to the list posted in the page. **Level 2:** COVID-19 Risk Is Moderate - CDC recommends that older adults, people of any age with [certain underlying medical conditions](#), and [others at increased risk for severe illness](#) postpone all nonessential travel to the following destinations: [Dominica](#), [Mauritius](#), [Papua New Guinea](#), [Saint Pierre and Miquelon](#) and [Seychelles](#). **Level 1:** COVID-19 Risk Is Low - CDC recommends that older adults, people of any age with certain underlying medical conditions, and others at increased risk for severe illness talk to their healthcare providers before traveling to the following destinations: [Cayman Islands](#), [Guernsey](#), [Isle of Man](#), [New Caledonia](#), [New Zealand](#), [Saint Vincent and the Grenadines](#), and [Thailand](#). **No Travel Health Notice:** COVID-19 Risk is Very Low: American Samoa; Anguilla; Bermuda; Brunei; Cambodia; Falkland Islands; Fiji; Greenland; Grenada; Laos; Macau SAR; Marshall Islands; Micronesia; Mongolia; Montserrat; Northern Mariana Islands; Palau; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Taiwan; Timor-Leste; and Vietnam. In addition: **Level 3:** No Data Available-COVID-19 Risk is Unknown - CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to the following destinations because these countries have not reported COVID-19 data and risk is unknown: [Cook Islands](#), [Kiribati](#), [Nauru](#), [Niue](#), [North Korea](#), [Pitcairn Islands](#), [Samoa](#), [Solomon Islands](#), [Tokelau](#), [Tonga](#), [Turkmenistan](#), [Tuvalu](#), and [Vanuatu](#).
- On 27 October 2020, CDC releases [Common Investigation Protocol for Investigating Suspected SARS-CoV-2 Reinfection](#). This protocol is designed to support a common public health investigation into suspected SARS-CoV-2 reinfection cases across jurisdictions. Confirming SARS-CoV-2 reinfection requires advanced laboratory diagnostic support built upon advanced planning to implement this protocol, or a locally adapted version, with referral of specimens to supporting laboratory networks. Data collected with this protocol will identify potential cases of reinfection, advance understanding of SARS-CoV-2 epidemiology, and inform public health response.
- On 27 October 2020, CDC indicates [the Investigative Criteria for Suspected Cases of SARS-CoV-2 Reinfection \(ICR\)](#). CDC is aware of recent reports of suspected cases of SARS-CoV-2 reinfection among persons who were previously diagnosed with COVID-19. There is currently no widely accepted definition of what constitutes SARS-CoV-2 reinfection and the reports use different testing methods, making reinfection diagnoses difficult. To develop a common understanding of what constitutes SARS-CoV-2 reinfection, CDC proposes using both: 1) investigative criteria for identifying cases with a higher index of suspicion for reinfection and; 2) genomic testing of paired specimens. CDC examined appropriate time periods, following initial SARS-CoV-2 infection or illness to investigate reinfection. Since August 2020, CDC has recommended against the need for retesting persons with asymptomatic infection within 90 days of first SARS-CoV-2 infection or illness because evidence to date suggests that reinfection does not occur within this time window ([CDC Guidance on Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19](#)).
- On 27 October 2020, CDC updates [the Interim Clinical Guidance for Management of Patients with Confirmed Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#). Risk Factors for Severe Illness, age is a strong risk factor for severe illness, complications, and death. 1,6,8,14,36-40 Among >44,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in China, the case fatality rate was highest among older persons: ≥80 years, 14.8%; 70–79 years, 8.0%; 60–69 years, 3.6%; 50–59 years, 1.3%; 40–49 years, 0.4%; <40 years, 0.2%. 36,41 In early U.S. epidemiologic data, case fatality was highest in persons aged ≥85 years (range 10%–27%), followed by those aged 65-84 years (3%–11%), aged 55-64 years (1%–3%), and aged <55 years (<1%). 37.
- On 27 October 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its COVID-19 [Questions and Answers: For People Who Use Drugs or Have Substance Use Disorder](#). Although the risk of severe illness from COVID-19 for people who use drugs or have substance use disorder is not known, people who use drugs may have underlying medical conditions that put them at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, and they may have concerns and questions related to their risk. Questions and Answers are provided 1. For People Who Use Drugs or Have Substance Use Disorder; and 2. For Medical Professionals.

[WHO - Weekly epidemiological update - 27 October 2020 \(Official\)](#)

WHO is calling on governments to carry out five key actions:

1. Assess the current outbreak situation in your country based on the latest data
2. For those countries where cases, hospitalizations and ICU rates are rising, make the necessary adjustments and course correct as quickly as possible.
3. Be clear and honest with the public about the status of the pandemic in your country and what is needed from every citizen to get through this pandemic together.

4. Put systems in place to make it easier for citizens to comply with the measures that are advised.
5. Improve contact tracing systems and focus on isolating all cases and quarantining contacts, to avoid mandatory stay at home orders for everyone.

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

- [According to the Hong Kong university \(HKU\) expert, blood plasma could lower COVID-19 death rate.](#) The death rate could be lowered among sickest patients using blood plasma treatment, the treatment can be effective if administered quickly, but city's blood stocks are low with only enough left to help 40 people.
- Following other similar COVID-19 outbreaks linked to imported seafood in China, [Beijing has also announced its intention to introduce a digital tracking system for tracing the import routes of frozen meat and seafood entering the country.](#) In a 26 October announcement, Beijing authorities announced that any companies transporting or storing imported frozen food items would be required to upload details about their products, including their source of origin and transport routes, to a government platform as of 11 November.
- [European Union warns not enough COVID vaccines for all in Europe until 2022.](#) A European Commission official warned diplomats from EU States in a closed-door meeting on 26 October that there would not be sufficient doses of COVID-19 vaccines for the entire population before the end of 2021. Given a likely limited supply, the Commission has for months urged EU governments to devise vaccination plans that would prioritise vulnerable and essential groups, such as healthcare workers, the elderly or people with chronic diseases.

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

- [According to a study, following the results of one of the world's largest studies into coronavirus antibody levels, less than 5% of England likely to be immune as antibodies waning rapidly.](#) The Imperial College London-led study of 365,000 individuals suggested that the number of people with detectable antibodies fell by 26% across England in the three months to September. The results of the React-2 study underscore the need for a vaccine to curb the pandemic.
- [A new study suggests that severe COVID-19 symptoms may continue for 20 days,](#) people who show severe COVID-19 infection might shed the virus and hence be infectious for as long as twenty days. The infection; however, does not last for more than 9 days in people with mild or no symptoms of the virus. The review was published in the journal *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*.
- [According to AstraZeneca, the COVID-19 vaccine in trials produces an immune response in older adults as well as the young.](#) The vaccine is raising hopes of protection for those most vulnerable to the coronavirus. Neither Oxford University nor partner AstraZeneca would release the data from the early trials showing the positive effects, which are being submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. However, AstraZeneca confirmed the basic findings about the vaccine called AZD1222, which were shared at a closed academic meeting. The phase 2 trials have shown that people over the age of 56, and some over 70, produced the same sort of antibody response as younger volunteers.
- [Protein mapping study reveals valuable clues for COVID-19 drug development.](#) One way to fight COVID-19 is with drugs that directly target SARS-CoV-2 that is the strategy employed by remdesivir. Another promising strategy is drugs that target the proteins within human cells that the virus needs to infect, multiply, and spread. With the aim of developing such protein-targeted antiviral drugs, a large, international team of researchers, funded in part by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has precisely and exhaustively mapped all of the interactions that take place between SARS-CoV-2 proteins and the human proteins found within infected host cells.
- [A new study of the coronavirus outbreak that took place in the Chinese capital Beijing earlier this summer, led by Beijing's Center for Disease Prevention and Control \(CDC\), has ultimately pointed to environment-to-human transmission via contaminated imported salmon as the most likely source.](#) This is a turnaround from the CDC's original position in June, when it denied there was any evidence linking imported salmon to the outbreak. It will come as a blow to seafood suppliers in the country. The study, published on 23 October, investigated the circumstances of the cluster of coronavirus cases reported in Beijing in June at the city's Xinfadi food market (XFDM). The original screening efforts of the Beijing CDC tested more than 10 million of the city's residents, according to the paper, returning 368 positive cases. Of these, 169 cases had a history of working at the Xinfadi market. Retrospective investigations dated the earliest symptom onset of a patient to 4 June. Genome sequencing from a swab of one of the positive salmon cases showed three mutated positions identical to the XFDM strain, with the probability of seven or more identical mutations determined at 60%.
- [An aspirin a day could reduce the risk of serious illness in people hospitalized for coronavirus indicated a new study conducted by the University of Maryland School of Medicine \(UMSOM\).](#) The study found that a low-dose daily aspirin pill reduces the likelihood of having to connect the coronavirus-infected patient to a fan by up to 40 percent or be admitted to the Intensive Care Unit. The study indicates that aspirin could also reduce the risk of dying from infection by nearly half of the infection. These estimates were made by comparing the performance of the disease in patients who did not take aspirin.

- According to a new study, [more than 80 per cent of COVID-19 patients at a hospital in Spain had a vitamin D deficiency](#). Researchers at the University Hospital Marques de Valdecilla in Santander, Spain looked at the vitamin D levels of 216 patients admitted to hospital for coronavirus treatment between 10-31 March. For the study, the 216 hospitalized patients' vitamin D levels were compared to those of a control group of 197 people of similar age and sex from a population-based cohort in the same geographical area. The researchers found that 82 per cent of the hospitalized COVID-19 patients (who were not taking supplements) were vitamin D deficient, while 47 per cent of the control group had the same deficiency. The study also noted that vitamin D levels were "especially lower" in men with COVID-19 compared to women.

Domestic Events of Interest

Nil

International Events of Interest

[Peru - First case of diphtheria confirmed in Peru, after 20 years of missing](#) (Media)

While fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, Peru's Ministry of Health reported the first case of diphtheria in 20 years. The case is a five-year-old girl living in a border area between the Lima fence and the La Victoria district, a very poor jurisdiction in the center of the capital. Deputy Minister of Public Health explained that the child, who was originally from the Amazonian Department of Loreto, has only been vaccinated at her birth; she had not received any vaccines again. After developing fever and sore throat, the girl was taken to Dos de Mayo Hospital, where she was hospitalized to confirm the diagnosis of diphtheria. In addition, the official reported that there is a second child, relative of the first, who is under investigation as a likely second case. Contact tracing is ongoing. Recently, the Ministry of Health launched a national campaign to vaccinate preventable diseases aimed at resuming the timetable that had been suspended in health centres following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Researches, Policies and Guidelines

[Canada - Most Canadians don't want federal election until at least 2022, new poll suggests](#) (Media)

A new poll suggests most Canadians do not want a federal election during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, or even in 2021. The results suggest 47% of respondents want the next election to be held in the fall of 2023 (four years after the last election) and 10% would like one to be held in 2022. Twenty-five per cent of respondents affirm they want Canadians to head to the polls next spring and 18% next fall.

[Canada - Motion to study feds' COVID-19 response passes, despite Liberal objections](#) (Media)

On 26 October 2020, the Conservative motion requesting a health committee study into the federal government's COVID-19 response and the disclosure of what could be thousands of pages of pandemic documents, despite Liberal objections, has passed. As part of the now-agreed-to study, the government is being asked to disclose a host of emails, documents, notes, and other records from the Prime Minister's Office, the Privy Council Office, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, as well as from cabinet ministers' offices since mid-March.

[Study - Largest study of voluntary organisations reveals devastating financial impacts of COVID-19](#) (Media)

The first results from the new COVID-19 Voluntary Sector Impact Barometer show that two in five (39%) charities and community groups are now reporting a deteriorating financial situation. With over half (56%) of organizations expecting demand for services to surge over the next month as the impact of local lockdowns and rising unemployment filters down to communities, many voluntary organizations are being forced to adapt the way they operate if they are to continue to meet the needs of those they support into the future. The study also found that the vast majority of voluntary sector organizations fear COVID-19 will continue to disrupt their plans in 2021. Eight out of 10 organizations (80%) predicted a negative impact on delivering their planned objectives over the next 12 months, and one in 10 (10%) think it likely they will be forced to close.

[Japan - Japan's government endorses bill to offer free COVID-19 vaccines](#) (Media)

On 27 October 2020, the Japanese government endorsed a bill to make novel coronavirus vaccinations free to all residents here. The bill will also compensate the suppliers of the vaccines should serious side effects be caused and free health care will be offered to recipients of the vaccine should they experience any adverse effects. The bill seeks to amend the current vaccination. The bill urges the public to make concerted efforts to get vaccinated and local municipalities will offer the inoculations with the costs being fully covered by the central government. While the Japanese government has been hoping that pharmaceutical firms will be able to develop a homegrown vaccine, so far local drug makers involved in COVID-19 vaccine developments are only in the early stages of clinical trials. The government also endorsed a separated bill on 27 October to revise the quarantine laws so that the isolation measures for people who test positive for the virus upon entry into Japan can be continued after February 2021.

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

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