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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 21 October 2020 at 21:00 EDT, a total of 206,360 cases have been recorded in Canada including 9,829 deaths. The cases are reported in Newfoundland and Labrador (287 confirmed cases, 4 deaths), Prince Edward Island (64 confirmed cases), Nova Scotia (1,097 confirmed cases, 65 deaths), New Brunswick (319 confirmed cases, 4 deaths), Quebec (96,288 confirmed cases, 6,074 deaths), Ontario (66,686 confirmed cases, 3,062 deaths), Manitoba (3,626 confirmed cases, 43 deaths), Saskatchewan (2,496 confirmed cases, 25 deaths), Alberta (23,402 confirmed cases, 296 deaths), British Columbia (12,057 confirmed cases, 256 deaths), Yukon (17 confirmed cases), Northwest Territories (8 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 22 October 2020, 12:17 GMT, there were 41,578,927 cases of COVID-19 and 1,137,758 deaths reported globally. Top 10 countries with the highest number of cases, by alphabetical order are: Argentina (1,037,325 cases, 27,519 deaths), Brazil (5,300,649 cases, 155,459 deaths); Colombia (981,700 cases, 29,464 deaths); France (957,421 cases, 34,048 deaths); India (7,708,947 cases, 116,681 deaths); Mexico (867,559 cases, 87,415 deaths); Peru (876,885 cases, 33,937 deaths); Russia (1,463,306 cases, 25,242 deaths); Spain (1,046,641 cases, 34,366 deaths); United States (8,585,748 cases, 227,419 deaths).

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

- [Workers at an Olymel meat-packing plant in the Beauce region are being tested for COVID-19, after an outbreak infected dozens of employees](#). The Union representing the facility's 1,200 employees indicated that 80 people have tested positive so far.
- [Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health has warned of COVID-19 is spreading in organized team sports](#). COVID-19 transmission is occurring in both adult's and children's leagues and in a variety of sports. Ottawa Public Health is investigating 14 teams where at least two people have tested positive for COVID-19 to determine if the virus spread within the team setting.
- [The Medical Officer of Health of Toronto has stated the city's positivity rate on COVID-19 tests hit 4.4 per cent the week of 12 October, and is now nearly double the "high alert" threshold previously cited by the Province](#). The positivity rate is also well above the three per cent goal cited by Toronto Public Health.
- [Nipawin and district is facing its first big challenge when it comes to COVID-19 and containing the spread of the novel coronavirus](#). On 13 October, there was a single case in the Saskatchewan Health Authority's Northeast 1 district (Nipawin, Carrot River, Village of Cumberland House and area), the following day there were eight cases and by 19 October, two more days, that number had jumped to 11. On 20 October, another seven cases were added to Northeast 1, bringing the active case load to 18. The communities in the affected area also include Aborfield, Aylsham, Choiceland, Codette, Love, Smeaton, Tobin Lake, White Fox and Zenon Park.
- [Procurement Minister has indicated that 100,000 rapid tests for COVID-19 has arrived in Canada](#). The tests are to be deployed to provincial governments, however federal officials will indicate which Province will get them first, or how many will be shipped where.

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

- [The U.S. health officials have redefined what counts as close contact with someone with COVID-19 to include briefer but repeated encounters](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had previously stated that close contact meant spending a solid 15 minutes within 6 feet of someone who tested positive for coronavirus. On 21 October, the CDC changed its definition to a total of 15 minutes or more, therefore shorter but repeated contacts that add up to 15 minutes over a 24-hour period now count as close contact. The CDC advises anyone who has been in close contact with a COVID-19 patient to quarantine for two weeks.
- The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) officials have warned that the country is approaching a "critical phase" in the COVID-19 pandemic](#), while also expressing optimism that one or more vaccines will be available for distribution before the end of 2020.

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

- [Brazilian President has overruled the country's Health Minister, by rejecting the announced purchase of 46 million doses of CoronaVac](#), a potential Chinese vaccine against COVID-19 being tested in Sao Paulo State. The Health Minister had announced earlier that the State government was participating in the vaccine's development.
- [European Union officials are moving to halt Canadians from travelling to the bloc of European countries amid the coronavirus pandemic](#). On 21 October 2020, officials met for their regularly scheduled meeting. According to a media source and other reports, the officials decided to remove three countries: Canada, Tunisia and Georgia, while adding Singapore to the approved travel list. An EU official speaking on condition of anonymity confirmed that the bloc has decided to change the makeup of the white list, the finalized version of which is expected to be made public within days. The Canada Border Services Agency does not provide a detailed breakdown of how many Canadians have been travelling to various EU countries, but Statistics Canada does note that in July, the month with the most up to date data, 57,000 people came to Canada from France, 11,000 came from the Netherlands and 42,000 from Germany.
- [Two children have had to be hospitalized in the Spanish region of Galicia after two separate accidents with hand sanitizers caused serious eye damage](#). One child is undergoing an amniotic membrane transplant. A similar incident occurred after a public hand sanitizer dispenser operated by a pedal sprayed the gel into a 2-year-old's face in the town of A Pobra de Caraminal. The boy had to be sedated because of pain, but his cornea does not appear to be damaged. The Pediatric and Ophthalmology Department of the Santiago y Barbanza Hospital has confirmed two children were hospitalized for serious ocular problems, and warned that young children should not use hand sanitizer unsupervised. The hospital noted that reactions are usually "mild" when hand sanitizer gets in eyes, but it should be taken seriously.
- During the first wave of COVID-19, researchers at Oxford University built a computer model that suggested if 56% of the the UK downloaded and used a contact-tracing app (alongside other control measures) it could end the epidemic in the country. [With the app only available since September, it's too early to tell how the system is actually doing](#). But even based on other countries whose apps have been available much longer, there's still very little evidence that they can make a real difference to fighting COVID-19. Apps may not need high download rates to have some impact. A second report from the Oxford researchers suggested that a well-staffed contact-tracing system that included digital as well as manual notifications could reduce infections by 4%-12% and deaths by 2%-15% if just 15% of the population used the app.
- [Authorities in the Australian State of Victoria suspect they have recorded a reinfection case of COVID-19](#), after a man tested positive on 20 October having initially contracted the disease in July. Officials previously thought that the second positive test may have been the result of shedding, however health experts had concluded there was insufficient evidence to support the shedding theory.
- The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) director has stated that [PAHO will only support the distribution of a vaccine that has proven to be safe and effective in clinical trials, reviewed by National Regulatory Authorities and recommended by the World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#).
- [The Center virology from Novosibirsk Ring Vector in Russia is developing a single vaccine against influenza and coronavirus](#). The center will begin testing the vaccine against the coronavirus "Epivakron" on teenagers aged 14-17 years. At the same time, the composition of the drug will not change - it is expected that it will suit both adults and children.

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

- The Assistance Publique – Hôpitaux de Paris indicated that a [drug that fights inflammation made by Switzerland's Roche limits the need for a transfer to intensive care units for patients suffering from moderate to severe COVID-19 related pneumonia](#). Roche's Actemra, also called RoActemra, is a retooled rheumatoid arthritis medicine that fights inflammation. [In another study conducted by researchers at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital](#), the investigators found that when tocilizumab (Actemra) was administered within the first two days of intensive care unit (ICU) admission, there was a 30 per cent relative decrease in mortality compared to patients whose treatment did not include early use of tocilizumab. Results are published in [JAMA Internal Medicine](#).

- The Director of [Vector Research Center](#) indicated that researchers are working on a combined vaccine that would protect against both flu and COVID-19. The Director ensured that Russia's coronavirus vaccine, EpiVacCorona, developed by the Vector Research Centre, is absolutely safe both for elderly people and those suffering from allergies.
- On 21 October 2020, an analysis was published by [JAMA Network Open](#) stating that [Black people in the United States, who are obese, are three times as likely to test positive for COVID-19 as obese White people](#). Black people with cancer have an 82% higher risk for testing positive for the virus, and in general are 72% more likely than White people to be hospitalized after becoming infected, the data showed. These findings suggest that racial disparities existed in COVID-19 outcomes that cannot be explained after controlling for age, sex, socioeconomic status, and comorbidity score; therefore, targeted interventions to support high-risk populations are needed.
- [Lack of antidotes called 'serious ethical dilemma' for COVID-19 vaccine challenge trial](#). UK scientists seeking approval to deliberately infect healthy people with COVID-19 in trials must first convince ethics specialists that, among other things, they have potential "rescue therapies" or antidotes to halt the disease. The problem is that, for the novel coronavirus, there is still no effective treatment or cure. Meaning, for now, that the best scientists planning the so-called human challenge studies can offer is Gilead's remdesivir, an antiviral drug that was found in a large trial to have no impact on COVID-19 death rates. A scientist at Imperial College London co-leading the COVID-19 challenge experiments indicated that the plan was to give remdesivir to infected volunteers based on a "strong belief" it will be effective if given in the very earliest stages of disease. Some ethics and medicine experts indicated that posed problems.
- [A participant who died during an AstraZeneca Plc Covid-19 trial in Brazil had not received the company's vaccine](#). Local newspapers earlier reported that a Brazilian volunteer had died from complications from the coronavirus, citing information from the country's health regulator Anvisa. AstraZeneca stating it could not comment on individual cases because of confidentiality and clinical trial rules. However, the University of Oxford declared on 22 October 2020 that [the Brazilian trial of its vaccine candidate would continue after the death of a volunteer](#), who, a source suggested to media, was part of the control group and had not received the vaccine. An independent review had revealed no safety concerns.
- A study published in [Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology](#) has found that individuals with mild or no COVID-19 symptoms may be infectious for no more than about 10 days, while those with severe illness may be able to spread the virus for as long as 20 days.

Domestic Events of Interest

[Canada, ON - Enteric outbreak declared on medical/surgical unit at Northumberland Hills Hospital in Cobourg](#) (Media)

Visitor restrictions are in place after an enteric outbreak was declared on a medical/surgical unit at Northumberland Hills Hospital in Cobourg. The hospital reports a cluster of patients with symptoms of enteric infection have been identified on the 2A medical/surgical unit. The hospital states it is working closely with the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit to restrict further spread and to communicate information. All identified patients have been isolated and are being care for with appropriate contact precautions.

[Canada, BC - Valley hits a grim milestone in overdose crisis](#) (Media)

More deaths have now been reported in the Okanagan from illicit drug overdose this year than in all of 2019. From January through September 2020, there were 84 overdose deaths in the Valley, compared to 83 last year. According to figures released 20 October 2020, by the B.C. Coroners Service, of the 84 overdose deaths from January through September in the Okanagan, 38 occurred in Kelowna. In Penticton, there were 46 illicit drug overdose deaths between January 2018 and September 2020. The death rate is similar to that recorded in the years 2016 through 2018, but more than three times higher than the level seen between 2014 and 2016. So far this year, 54 per cent of illicit drug overdose deaths have occurred inside private residences and 28 per cent have been in social or supportive housing units. The Corners Service notes that fifteen per cent of such deaths have occurred in vehicles, parks, or on sidewalks and streets. Across B.C., 127 people died of illicit drug overdoses last month, compared to 60 in September 2019. An average of four people died every day last month, but the number declined from 150 in August and is lower than the record monthly number of 183 in June. Fatal overdoses began rising in B.C. about the time of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March.

International Events of Interest

[United States - Health officials warn of increase in fentanyl overdoses](#) (Media)

With just two months left in 2020, King County is seeing a record-breaking number of fentanyl overdoses. Media reports new numbers from King County Public Health said there were 116 fentanyl overdoses in 2019. As of this October 2020, there has been 135 fentanyl overdoses, surpassing all of year 2019. Fentanyl overdoses are disproportionately affecting

young people who think they are purchasing real prescription pills off the street, but end up getting counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl.

South Korea - South Korea sticks to flu vaccine plan despite safety fears after 25 die (Media)

South Korean officials refused on 22 October 2020 to suspend a seasonal influenza inoculation effort, despite growing calls for a halt, including an appeal from a key group of doctors, after the deaths of at least 25 of those vaccinated. Health authorities reported that they found no direct links between the deaths and the vaccines. According to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA), at least 22 of the dead, including a 17-year-old boy, were part of a campaign to inoculate 19 million teenagers and senior citizens free of charge. [No toxic substances had been found in the vaccines, and at least five of the six people investigated had underlying conditions.](#) The program was suspended for three weeks after it was discovered that some 5 million doses, which need to be refrigerated, had been exposed to room temperature while being transported to a medical facility. South Korea's vaccines come from a variety of sources. Manufacturers include local drug makers GC Pharma, SK Bioscience and Ilyang Pharmaceutical Co, along with France's Sanofi and Britain's Glaxosmithkline. Distributors include LG Chem Ltd and Boryung Biopharma Co. Ltd., a unit of Boryung Pharm Co. Ltd. South Korea ordered a fifth more flu vaccines this year to ward off what it calls a "twindemic", or the prospect that people with flu develop coronavirus complications and overburden hospitals in winter.

South Korea - TB Alliance with the Support of the Republic of Korea Announce Initiative to Broaden Adoption and Scale Up of Improved Treatments for Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis (TB) (Official)

TB Alliance has announced an initiative to broaden adoption and scale up of improved tuberculosis (TB) treatment regimens. This initiative, known as LIFT-TB (Leveraging Innovation for Faster Treatment of Tuberculosis) will also seek to increase treatment completion rates for drug-resistant forms of TB in some of the countries most affected by this form of TB across the Southeast and Central Asian regions, namely Indonesia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Vietnam, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The project will be implemented in partnership with the International Tuberculosis Research Center (ITRC), located in Korea, TB Alliance's primary collaborator for this project. The project will rely on technical assistance from other international and national technical partners, including KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation.

Researches, Policies and Guidelines

United States - Lyme disease vaccine: Valneva reports positive second Phase 2 data (Media)

Valneva, specialty vaccine company, has announced positive initial results for its second Phase 2 study (VLA15-202) of Lyme disease vaccine candidate VLA15. Compared to study VLA15-201, study VLA15-202 investigated a vaccination schedule of Month 0-2-6 based on matching doses. VLA15 was generally safe across all doses and age groups tested. The tolerability profile including fever rates was comparable to other recombinant vaccines. As in VLA15-201, no related Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) were observed in any treatment group. The immunological response in older adults is particularly encouraging, as already observed in VLA15-201. Furthermore, results did not indicate that prior exposure to *Borrelia spirochetes* (sero-positivity) has an impact on immunogenicity or safety, also as observed in VLA15-201.

ECDC - Rapid outbreak assessment: Multi-country outbreak of *Salmonella* Typhimurium and *S. Anatum* infections linked to Brazil nuts (Official)

As of 20 October 2020, 123 cases of *S. Typhimurium* ST19 and one case of *S. Anatum* have been reported, of which in the UK (105, including the *S. Anatum* case), France (14), Luxembourg (3), the Netherlands (1) and Canada (1). A case-control study in the UK and patient interviews in the UK, France and Luxembourg indicated Brazil nuts and nut bars as likely vehicles of infections. Two batches of Brazil nuts from Bolivia, sampled at the British Processing Company B, tested positive for *S. Typhimurium* ST19 (Batch A) and *S. Anatum* ST64 (Batch B) matching the outbreak strains. ECDC notes that, it is likely that the origin of infections is contaminated Brazil nuts, but with the available data, the exact point of contamination cannot be established. Extensive recalls and withdrawals of nut products have been implemented since August 2020. The outbreak appears to be controlled and the likelihood of the occurrence of new cases that are linked to this event is low but possible, as nut products have a long shelf-life and people may have bought the products before control measures were implemented. ECDC and EFSA monitor the public health impact and the success of control measures with EU/EEA countries and the UK.

International - Mandatory vaccinations required in only half of all countries (Media)

A new McGill-led study comparing policies around the world finds broad implementation of mandatory vaccination mandates. However, the penalties for failing to vaccinate differ significantly by country, ranging from fines to jail time. The study, published in [Vaccine](#), assesses national mandatory vaccination policies from all UN-recognized countries worldwide. Researchers found that 105 out of the 193 countries (54%) studied had evidence of a national mandatory vaccination policy that required at least one vaccine. Of those, 62 countries (59%) also have one or more penalties that can be imposed on individuals who do not comply. The frequency, types, and severity of penalties for failing to comply with mandatory vaccination varied widely across all regions from relatively minor penalties like small one-time fines to jail time. Educational and financial penalties were the most common. Most educational penalties deny school enrollment until

vaccination requirements have been met. Of the 32 countries with financial penalties, 53% have one-time fines of less than \$1,000 USD. More severe penalties entailed jail time, a possibility in 12 countries, seven of which include less than six months of jail time. Italy's mandatory vaccination policy had among the most severe penalties, with violations potentially resulting in the temporary loss of parental rights.

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

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