COVID-19 Infection and Vaccine Trajectories: The Vulnerability of Racial Minority and Immigrant Communities in Canada

Vaccine equity holds the key to ending the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, most prior work on vaccine equity compares the vaccine uptake across neighborhoods with varying socio-demographic composition or assesses whether vaccine disparity across neighborhoods has diminished over time. They seldom examine the extent to which vaccination helps reduce inequalities in the prevalence of COVID-19 across neighborhoods. Using administrative data from the City of Toronto, we compare the vaccine trajectories of neighborhoods with low, moderate, and high COVID-19 rates. We also examine whether disparities in COVID-19 rates have narrowed or widened as vaccinations have become more available. By mid-June 2021, differences in vaccination rates by neighborhoods’ COVID-19 levels were small, but disparities in COVID-19 rates across neighborhoods persisted. Equality in vaccination rates is not a silver bullet to reducing inequalities in COVID-19 infections across neighborhoods with varying socio-demographic characteristics and likely variations in exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

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