

Taking the pulse of COVID-19 in Saskatchewan—in 9 charts (May 2021)

Results from the Social Contours and COVID-19 Survey, Round 10

May 28, 2021

From May 4, 2020 (Phase 1 of the Re-open Saskatchewan Plan), SPHERU researchers have collected data about COVID-19 from Saskatchewan residents through our [Social Contours and COVID-19 Survey](#). This survey has four objectives: 1) collect behavioural, perceptual, social, and place-based data (i.e., how we act, think, interact, and move); 2) assign a COVID-19 risk level to people and places, over time; 3) identify lower- and higher-risk places in our province; and 4) communicate this information to public health officials and the general public.

Data below are based on Social Contours and COVID-19 study; as of May 2, 2021; this includes 10,627 all respondents to date (unless otherwise indicated). Results are age-gender-location of residence weighted (Census 2016, Saskatchewan adult population) and data are 4-week moving averages when time trends are presented. In this brief, some notable findings in the latest iteration of the Social Contours and COVID-19 study are reported (April 2021, n=1,280)

Perceptions on response to COVID-19 in Saskatchewan

In Round 10, April 2021, of the Social Contours and COVID-19 survey, we asked respondents about their vaccine intentions, perceptions on the vaccine roll-out and government countermeasures, and their most recent behaviour. In addition, we asked why Saskatchewan's COVID-19 metrics (case rates, hospitalizations, deaths) were the way they were and asked respondents for feedback on issues such as lockdown fatigue, government performance, public health order clarity, and general observance of public health orders. In this brief, we report some key findings.

Key takeaways

- By early May 2021, 84.4% of respondents indicated that they were prepared to get a vaccine when eligible, while 4.5% were vaccine hesitant and 11.2% said they would refuse. When respondents were asked to indicate why they were vaccine hesitant, concerns over safety and a wish for more scientific evidence were the most common responses. Similarly, vaccine refusal was most highly attributed to insufficient amount of testing and concerns over safety.
- Vaccine acceptance was higher in females compared to males, those above the age of 64 and among respondents living in either Saskatoon or Regina compared to those in mid-sized towns or rural Saskatchewan.
- After new COVID-19 variants (83%), 79% of respondents indicated that the second most concerning matter was the continuing third wave of the pandemic. When rating the government's performance in getting people vaccinated with similar sentiment about the federal government, 53% of respondents felt the provincial government had done a good or very good job compared to 30% for the federal government.
- When asked why cases and deaths continue as they are in Saskatchewan, respondents commonly attributed the lockdown fatigue (45%) and not enough people following public health orders (46%); however, 59% of respondents believe that public health restrictions don't go far enough.
- Women, those above the age of 64, and respondents from Saskatoon or Regina indicated that public health restrictions did not go far enough. Meanwhile, men, those younger than 49, and respondents from mid-size towns or rural Saskatchewan were more likely to indicate that they were tired of restrictions.

1. Vaccine intention amongst adults in Saskatchewan

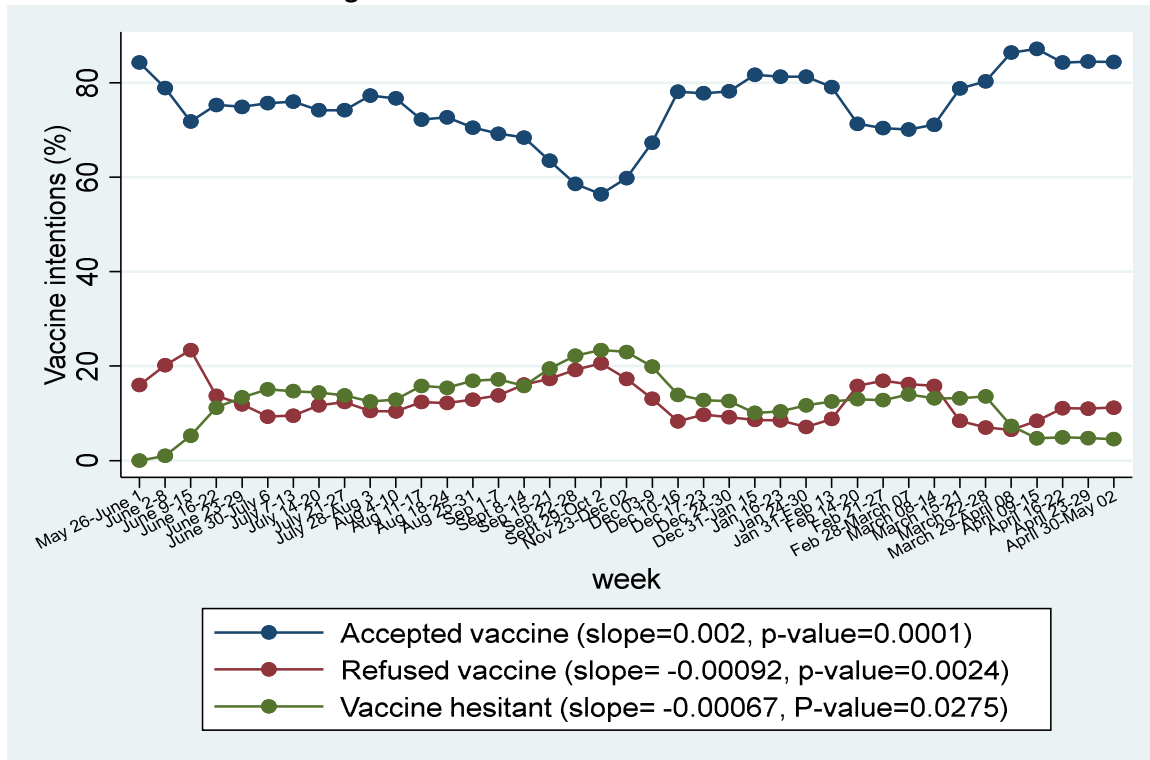


Figure 1. In the last month, vaccine acceptance experienced an all-time peak of 87.2% the second week of April, followed by a slight decrease to 84% for the remainder of the month. Vaccine hesitancy continues to trend downward from the September 2020 peak, plateauing at roughly 4.7% throughout April 2021. As of May 2, 2021, vaccine refusal had increased to 11.2%, up from 6.5% at the end of March 2021.

2. Respondents who will get a vaccine if one is available, by region.

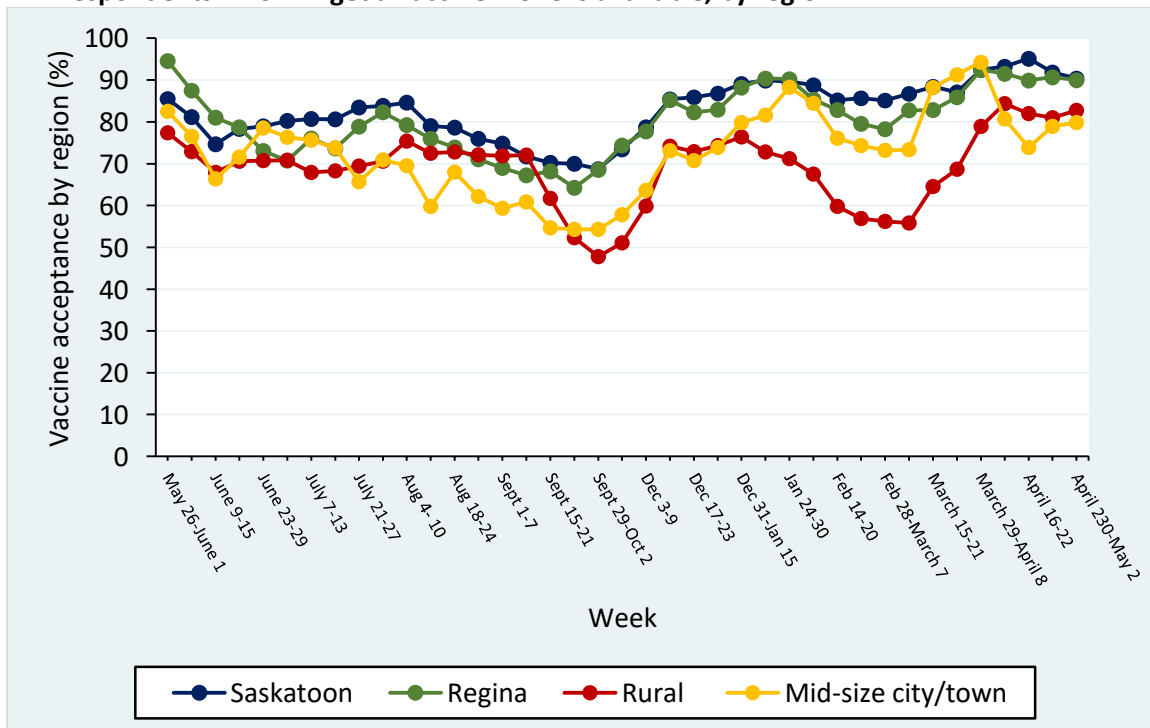


Figure 2. In agreement with earlier trends, vaccines acceptance continued to be lower in rural (83%) and mid-size cities/towns (79%) compared to Regina (90%) and Saskatoon (90%) in April 2021.

3. “How good a job do you think the provincial government has been doing in getting people vaccinated?”



Figure 3. From mid-April to early May 2021, 53% of respondents said that the provincial government had done either a very good or good job in getting people vaccinated, compared to 47% of respondents who believed that their effort was fair or poor (n=1,280).

4. “Thinking about the overall immunization plan (phase 1 and phase 2), will this help us come out of the pandemic sooner than later?”

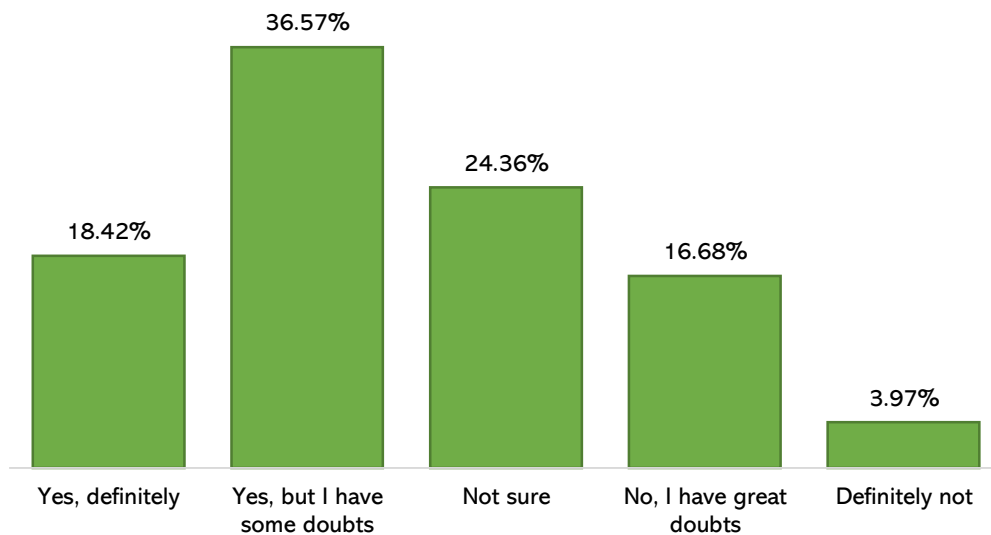


Figure 4. The majority of respondents (55%) believe the immunization plan will help us come out of the pandemic sooner, but 45% of those respondents were not sure or had doubts that it will (n=1,280).

5. “Looking ahead to the next three months (May to July) for each issue below, indicate your level of concern.”

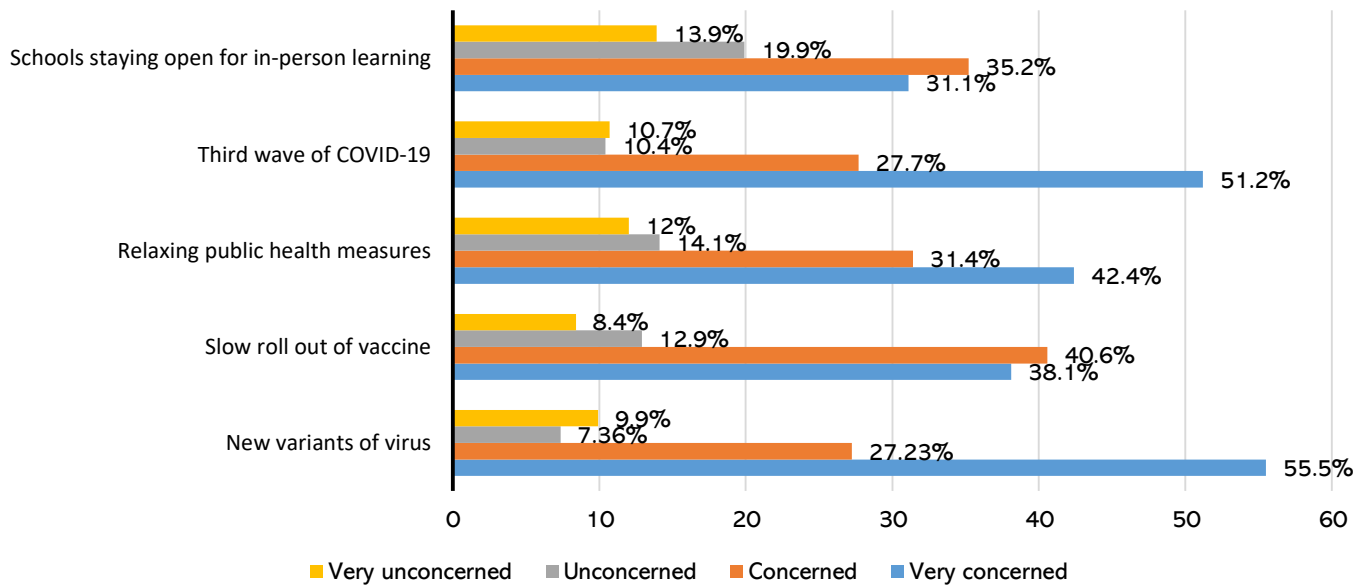


Figure 5. In the upcoming three months, the highest portion of respondents were very concerned with either the new variants of the virus (55.5%) or a third wave of COVID-19 (51.2%). In terms of the people who indicated that they are very concerned or concerned, 83% voiced their concern about new variants, 79% about the third wave of COVID-19, 79% regarding the slow vaccine rollout, and 74% about relaxing public health measures. (n =1,280)

6. “Overall, thinking about restrictions that have been put in place in your area to prevent the coronavirus from spreading do you think the restrictions go too far, don’t go far enough, or are about right?” (Saskatchewan, overall).

Public health restrictions

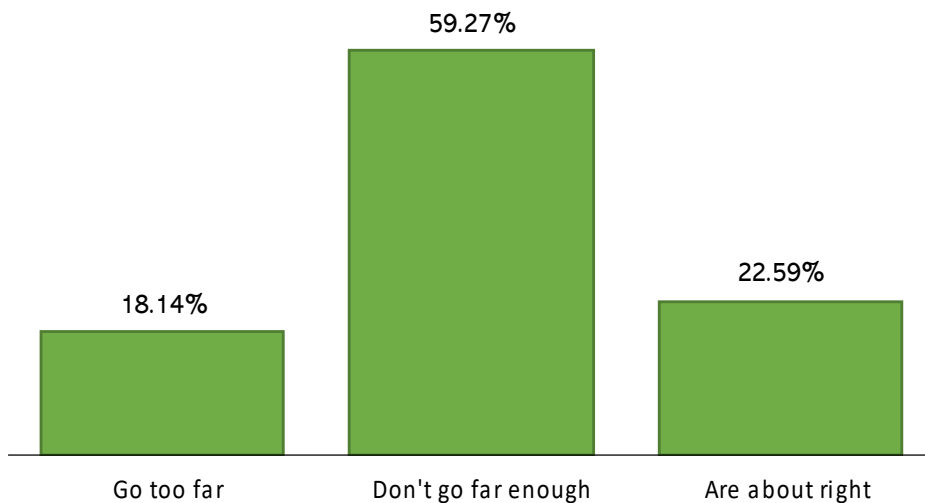


Figure 6. Majority of respondents (59.27%) believe that public health restrictions do not go far enough to prevent COVID-19 from spreading. (n =1,280)

7. “Overall, thinking about restrictions that have been put in place in your area to prevent the coronavirus from spreading do you think the restrictions go too far, don’t go far enough, or are about right?” (By region in Saskatchewan).

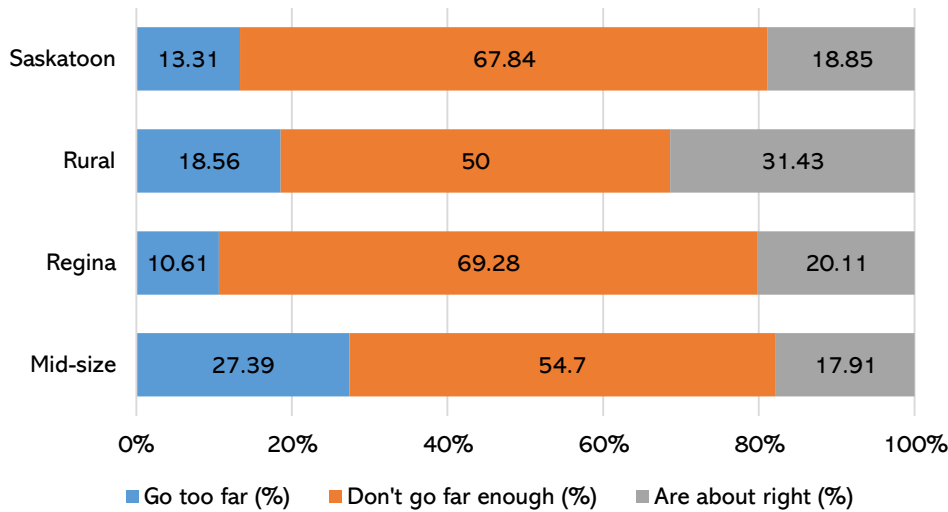


Figure 7. To breakdown the results from Fig. 6, a higher portion of respondents from Saskatoon (68%) and Regina (69%)—as compared to respondents from rural (50%) and mid-sized (55%) regions—believed that public health restrictions did not gar far enough. (n =1,280)

8. Visited a location in the last 7 days with a high risk of exposure to COVID-19 (e.g. bars, restaurants, gym/fitness facility, someone else’s home).

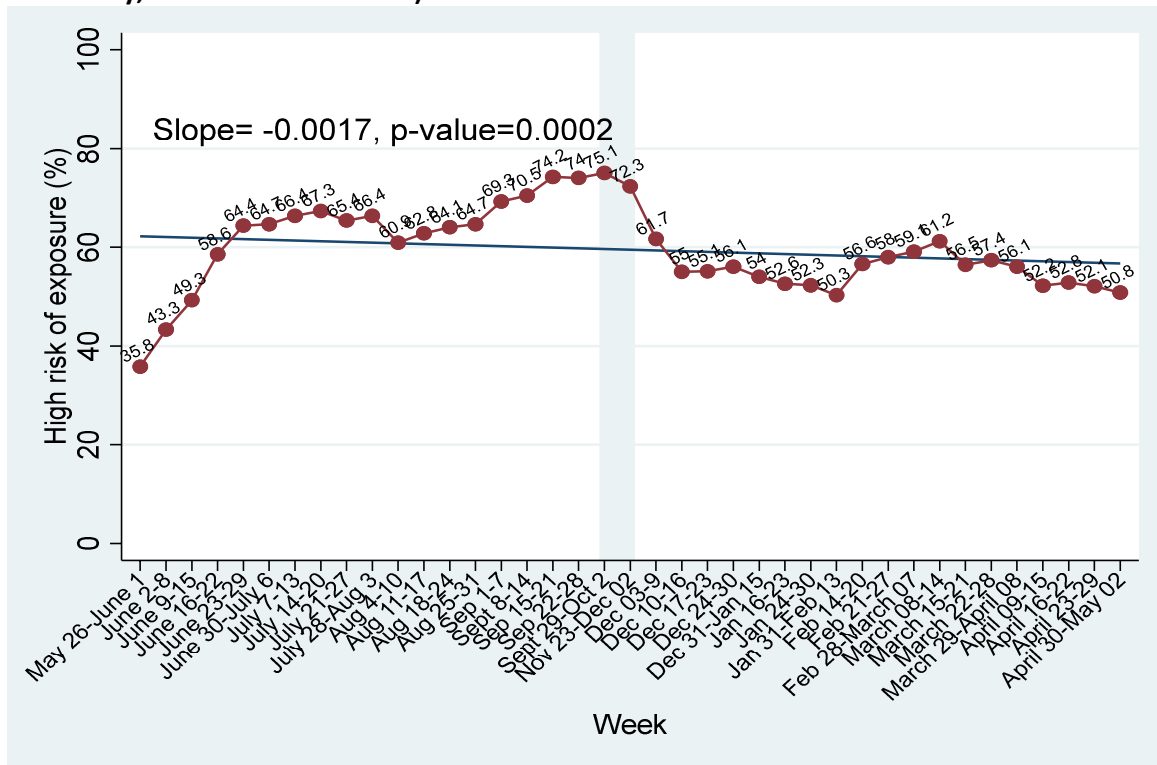


Figure 8. In the month of April, over half of respondents had visited a high-risk location in the last seven days. The following are considered high-risk locations: restaurant/bar/night club, gym/fitness centre, someone else’s home, personal/health care services, school/daycare and long-term care home or senior’s home.

9. Work in a location with a high risk of exposure to COVID-19

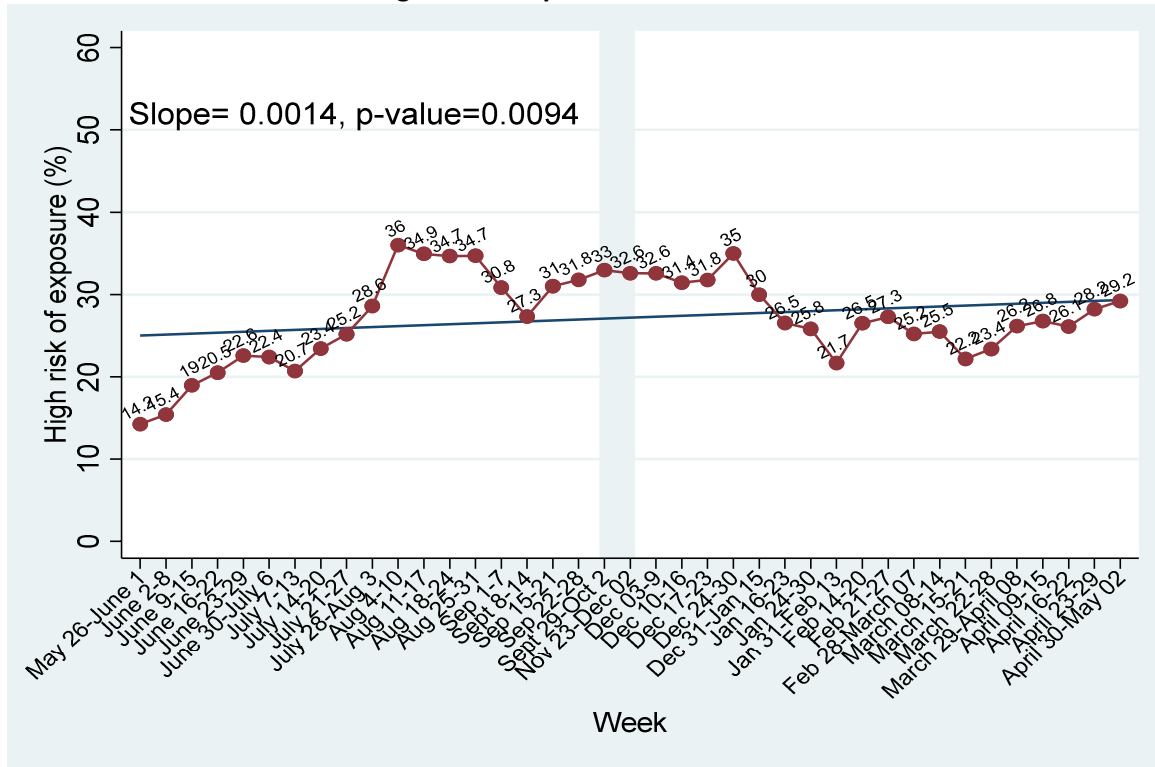


Figure 9. Over the past two months, an increasing number of respondents were classified as having high-risk of exposure workplaces. Workplaces were considered high risk if the individual worked outside the home, in an indoor setting, with different people. By the beginning of May, 3 out of 10 respondents were classified with high-risk of workplace exposure.

For more Social Contours and COVID-19 Saskatchewan survey results:

<https://spheru.ca/covid-19/socialcontours/covid-19-results.php>

Social Contours and COVID-19

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