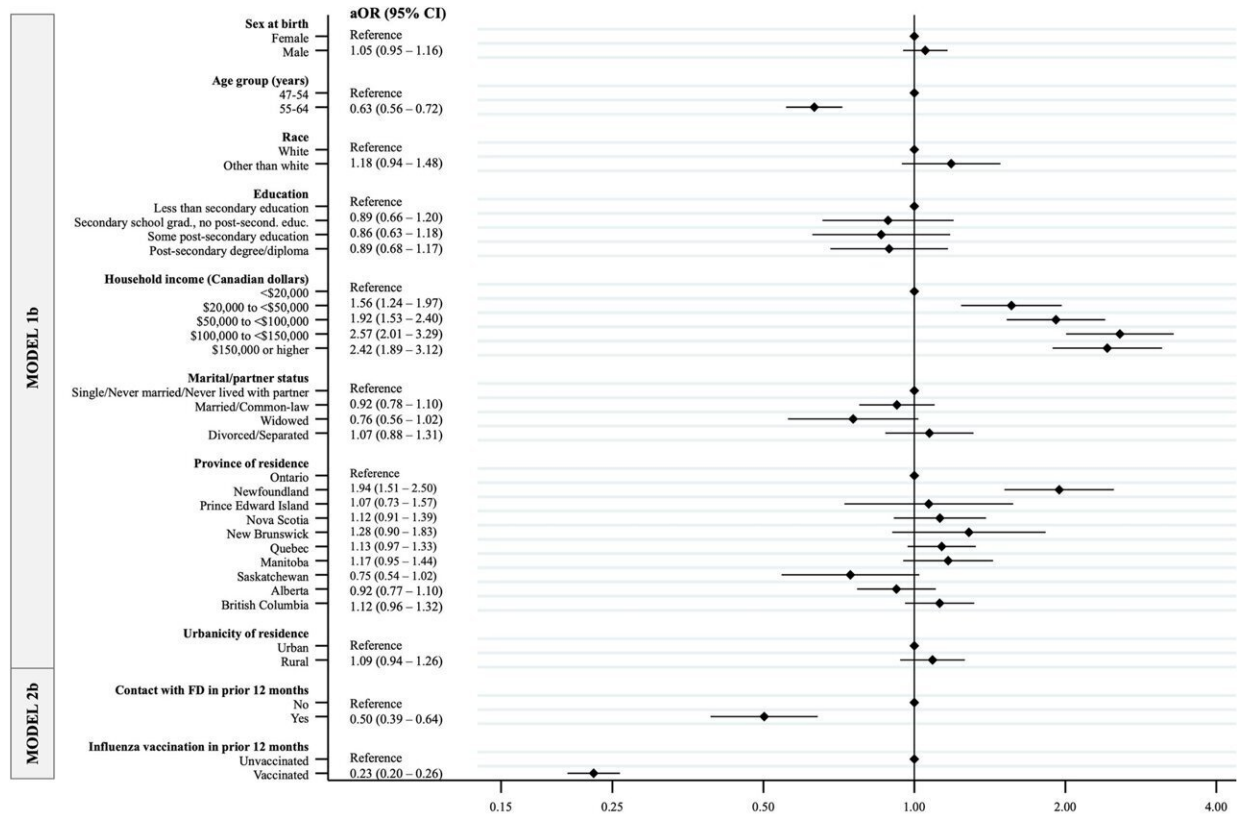


# Q&A: Examining low vaccine uptake among at-risk Canadians

November 2 2022



Factors associated with pneumococcal non-vaccination among CLSA participants aged 47–64 who reported having a chronic medical condition (CMC) and had complete data (n = 10,284). Adjusted odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs), plotted on the log-odds ratio scale, were estimated through nested logistic regression models: Model 1 for sociodemographic characteristics; Model 2b for recent history of contact with a family doctor and recent influenza vaccination history, adjusting for socio-demographics. Credit: *PLOS ONE* (2022). DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0275923

As the flu season begins and the COVID-19 pandemic continues, pneumococcal vaccination is more important than ever to prevent disease and death from pneumonia and other forms of pneumococcal disease.

But vaccine uptake remains low among adults at high risk, say researchers from McGill University.

## **Q&A with Giorgia Sulis**

### **What is pneumococcal disease?**

Pneumococcus is the leading bacterial cause of [pneumonia](#) and can cause other serious infections, including sepsis and meningitis. Pneumonia is among the top 10 causes of death among adults in Canada. Most cases of pneumococcal disease are vaccine preventable.

### **What question did you set out to answer?**

Understanding vaccine uptake and the factors associated with non-vaccination has important implications for reducing the risk of pneumococcal disease and can save lives. To find answers, our study (published in *PLOS ONE*) analyzed self-reported data of pneumococcal vaccine uptake from 33,061 Canadian community-dwelling adults enrolled in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA). Specifically, we examined two key groups at high risk: [older adults](#) (i.e. those aged 65 or older) and adults aged 47-64 who had underlying chronic medical conditions.

### **What did you find?**

While most cases of [pneumococcal disease](#) are vaccine-preventable, pneumococcal vaccine uptake remains low among those at high risk, particularly among adults aged 65 and older and adults with an underlying chronic health condition.

We found that about half of those aged 65 and older, and over 80% of those aged 47 to 64 who had an underlying chronic condition reported never receiving a pneumococcal vaccine in their lifetime. While the proportion of non-vaccinated adults was lower among those who got the [flu shot](#) or had contact with a [family doctor](#) in the previous year, many people missed opportunities for vaccination. This contrasts sharply with the 80% vaccination coverage target set by the Canadian National Immunization Strategy, to be achieved by 2025.

## **What is the significance of these findings?**

Our study is the largest analysis of pneumococcal vaccine uptake and factors associated with non-vaccination among high-risk [adults](#) in Canada. It also sheds new light on the problem of missed opportunities for vaccination. We hope that our study can contribute to raise awareness about this problem and promote effective strategies aimed at increasing pneumococcal vaccine uptake to reduce hospitalizations and mortality.

**More information:** Giorgia Sulis et al, Pneumococcal vaccination uptake and missed opportunities for vaccination among Canadian adults: A cross-sectional analysis of the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA), *PLOS ONE* (2022). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0275923](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0275923)

Provided by McGill University

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