



Outbreak-associated COVID-19 cases by industry in Ontario

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What the researcher(s) did

The researchers conducted a study of reported COVID-19 workplace outbreaks and associated cases in Ontario between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021 to estimate incidence by industry. Workplace outbreaks were identified through reportable disease data and classified by industry. Industry-specific denominator data for those primarily working outside the home were obtained through the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey.

What the researcher(s) found

The researchers found that workplace outbreak-associated cases accounted for 12% of all cases and 7% of hospitalizations among the working-age population during the study period. While incidence varied throughout the study period, they were consistently higher in five industries: agriculture, healthcare and social assistance, food manufacturing, educational services, and transportation and warehousing. Most industries had outbreak-associated case rates lower than community rates.

RDC Datasets used

Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey 2020 and 2021 (monthly for Ontario)

Policy areas this research can inform

- Government
- Health
- Labour

Policy implications of this research

This study offers important insight into the differential burden of COVID-19 disease by industry and the role of the workplace in the transmission of COVID-19. The results may assist in ongoing efforts to reduce transmission of COVID-19 by prioritizing resources, as well as industry-specific guidance, vaccination and public health messaging. An improved understanding of workplace outbreaks of COVID-19 is essential to designing equitable public health measures for reducing COVID-19-related risk. Plus, improved occupational surveillance would enhance the ability to effectively respond to COVID-19 and future pandemics.

Read the full article

Buchan, S. A., Smith, P. M., Warren, C., Murti, M., Mustard, C., Kim, J. H., ... Smith, B. T. (2022). Incidence of outbreak-associated COVID-19 cases by industry in Ontario, Canada, 1 April 2020–31 March 2021. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 79, 403-411. doi:10.1136/oemed-2021-107879.

