

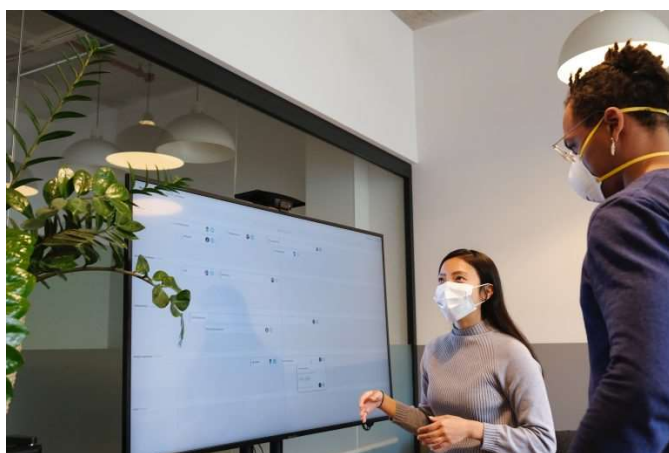
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Editor-in-chief



As I write this in late July, the infectiousness of the delta COVID variant is being compared with that of chicken pox. Authorities are sure that the current vaccines are very effective at keeping people out of the hospital. However, they are less sure how much they protect people from being infected by the delta variant and passing it on. South of the border, some states are already deep in a new wave – Louisiana is announcing more new cases per day than their peak last October, and numbers are still increasing. Numbers from Alberta and British Columbia, while low, are showing the upward curve that signals an R number greater than 1, and the rest of Canada may not be far behind.

What are we doing to fight this – and what can we do? Vaccination uptake curves have flattened off across the country: if vaccinations are going to pick up again to the point where herd immunity is reliable, it will probably require a change of heart by people who have so far declined vaccination. Governments are showing signs of pandemic fatigue: in some provinces even people who know that they are carrying the coronavirus are now permitted to mingle in public unmasked. And most Canadian universities are not requiring vaccination for faculty or students who want to be on campus in the fall. (Is there a “right” to be in public places unvaccinated? Not according to the experts at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights. If you go there today, and are over the age of 12 and not fully vaccinated, you will not be allowed in.)



Universities across the country have been hoping to reopen in September, more or less as usual. There's no doubt about it: we're all tired of online teaching, we're all tired of online meetings, and we are all tired of examinations without effective invigilation. If things don't go well over the next month, we may be back to there for another semester or even year. Worse, if we do get back to campus and the virus starts to spread, some of us may be facing a repeat of March 2020 when in-person classes have to become online at a few days' notice. Please be careful: it's up to us as individuals now, more than ever.

Stay well.