

Covid-19 Impact on the Canadian Economy and Population Health

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Reflection

Canada repetitively extended their state of emergency during the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving many Canadians in the dark revolving financial measures and population health. Historical experiences from various countries have shown their expertise in effective containment of respiratory-related infections, specifically on strategies employed to avoid viral containment missteps and to ease regional restrictions. Canada should reopen its economy and revise its restrictions through implementing modified provincial and regional strategies to accommodate Canadians according to population dispersion across the country and diverse socioeconomic populations.

Stakeholders in asserting the movement to reopen the economy include provincial and federal governments, Health Canada, businesses, and Canadians. Provincial and federal governments control the funding to the healthcare system, which is currently saturated with Covid-19 related cases seeking critical medical attention; thus, the situation charges the struggle encompassing inadequate staffing arrangements, heavy physical workload and mental toll on healthcare providers, and problematic accessibility to crucial supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators (Cook, 2020) [1]. If the provincial governments take on a more authoritative role to specify the framework of regional isolation protocols, then effective containment can be achieved to reopen sections of provinces in an efficient and safe manner. Federal governments can provide more education and informative videos/ads regarding protective measures of infection control protocols, which would motivate safe practice of social distancing and general good hygiene. These protocols would be motivating people to reenter

the workforce safely in order to reignite financial districts and trade, to continue supply production of essential goods and maintenance of a supply chains (Hobbs, 2020) [2]. Canadians themselves are stakeholders of how efficiently the economy can reopen, based on the fact taxpayers fund the healthcare system and the current Canadian economic response plan, with a distressing reported loss of three million jobs during the Covid-19 peak (Hobbs, 2020) [2]. Unorganized strategic plans could foster a new global economic depression starting with the disruption of a nation's unstable financial and industrial situation.

Population health is the approach applied to improve health of a population and promote health equities among subpopulations (Coburn et al., 2003) [3]. Public Health Agency of Canada recognizes health statuses can be influenced by socioeconomic, physical, biological, and developmental factors (Coburn et al., 2003) [3]. Given pandemic lockdown protocol and restrictions, Canadians confront unintended consequences of potential severe public health ramifications. A conceivable mental health crisis could overthrow Covid-19 outbreak issues given the amplified anxiety/stress associated to repetitive media exposure of protective behaviours, consequentially burdening healthcare services/resources (Garfin et al., 2020) [4]. Thus, revising restrictions to allow the proposed reunion of small family groups coinciding with continuing bans on mass gatherings could potentially address aspects of population health while ensuring Covid-19 containment.

In retrospect, the Canadian government's response to mitigate and manage the Covid-19 outbreak was slow, given the delayed explicit specifications on enforcing safety measures to minimize deaths, it consequentially allowed the escalation of Covid-19 cases to burden the healthcare system,

which also resulted in a national quarantine inflicting economic damage. Previous mitigation measures of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in a dense population of Singapore and Hong Kong in 2002-2003 have demonstrated their effective infection control interventions which could not allow for social distancing given their estimated people per square kilometer (Anderson et al., 2020). Epidemiologists propose stopping mass gatherings via social distancing, implementing contact tracing, vigorous public/personal infection control practices with the use of PPE and disinfection (Anderson et al., 2020) [5]. Technological advances integrated into contact tracing would serve effective viral tracking measures. Given dense populations of Eastern countries making social distancing impossible on their streets, their ability to mandate certain protocols of public usage of face coverings have minimized infection counts. Canada appears to straggle in implementing its own version of local/regional protocols to efficiently reopen the economy. Continuous delays in revising restrictions and implementing protocols will ultimately bring a cycling effect to negatively impact Canadian economy, its population health, and government debt.

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