

## Immunity task force unable to compile national data

Despite promises from Ottawa, researchers have been unsuccessful in tracking immunity to virus

JUSTIN LING

Canada has been unable to get a national picture of the country's immunity to COVID-19, despite promises from the federal government that it would conduct mass blood tests to find out how common the antibodies are.

Epidemiologists have been frustrated by the lack of movement, insisting that keeping tabs on the prevalence of these antibodies can improve public-health orders, inform vaccination plans and measure

how close the country is to herd immunity. They point to the United States and Britain, which have done exactly that.

But the scientists and researchers tapped by Ottawa to collect this data insist their research is continuing, even though mass blood tests for virus immunity are not the game changer that was promised. Their current work, the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force says, will be instrumental in the coming months.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced last April that his government would fund "a series of countrywide blood

test surveys" that would ensure the "rapid reporting of results" of just how many Canadians were immune from the virus. To do that, the government set up the task force of scientists and public-health officials, and housed it in McGill University.

These so-called serology tests do not indicate whether someone is currently infectious, but measure the level of antibodies in the bloodstream, which can indicate if a person previously had COVID-19 and whether they are protected from reinfection.

■ IMMUNITY, A15

## Pfizer presses Health Canada to increase doses taken from each vial

MARIEKE WALSH OTTAWA  
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Pfizer-BioNTech is pushing Health Canada to amend its COVID-19 vaccine label and formally recognize that each vial contains six doses rather than five, which would allow the company to send fewer vials to Canada but could complicate the vaccination program.

Pfizer submitted a request to Health Canada on Friday to amend the vaccine label, company spokesperson Christina Antoniou said on Tuesday. The company's contract with Canada is based on delivering doses, rather than a set number of vials, she said.

"Obtaining six doses from the current multi-dose vial ... can help minimize vaccine wastage and enable the most efficient use of the vaccine," she said.

Medical staff in Canada have sometimes been able to withdraw six doses, but officials have said it's not consistent.

However, Pfizer said with specialized syringes, a sixth dose can be reliably pulled from each vial. These syringes are in short supply around the world.

The United States and European Union have already accepted the requested change.

Canada is buying 40 million doses from Pfizer. If Health Canada approves the change, Canada could get about 6.7 million vials rather than eight million.

The change could increase the number of people who can receive the vaccine worldwide.

However, it could also be a challenge for Canada's vaccination program, which has already hit several speed bumps.

Shipments from Pfizer have had delays, and Canada will get no shots this week.

Officials hope vaccine candidates from Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca will soon be approved in Canada. But so far no delivery is expected before April from those two companies.

■ VACCINE, A15

{ FIRST NATIONS }

## FINDING HER IDENTITY

How beading lessons reconnected a residential school survivor to her culture ■ A7



Alley Yapput, right, an Anishinaabe two-spirit artist, is sharing his craft skills with his mother Madeline, teaching her how to bead and make moccasins. DAVID JACKSON/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

## A dream in tatters: Ethiopia's peace laureate faces blame for shocking list of alleged military atrocities in Tigray region

GEOFFREY YORK  
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ANALYSIS

Less than a year ago, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau strolled through a verdant garden in Addis Ababa with the world's newest Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

As they enjoyed a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony in Unity Park, on the site

of a former imperial palace, Mr. Trudeau must have seen Mr. Abiy as a wise choice for an African partner. The young leader had been praised for freeing political prisoners and lifting the ban on opposition parties, and he was a Nobel prize winner for his peace deal with his former Eritrean enemies.

In a tweet soon after, Mr. Trudeau described Unity Park as "a symbol of Prime Minister Abiy's democratic reforms" and the "positive transformation" of the country. The site was designed to showcase Mr. Abiy's new narrative, in which Ethiopia's diverse ethnicities would be woven into a

single harmonious and unified people.

A year later, Mr. Abiy's dream is in tatters. The former hero of peace and democracy is instead facing blame for a shocking list of alleged atrocities by his military and its allies in the Tigray region: massacres, sexual assaults, ethnic cleansing, the kidnapping of refugees, the destruction of refugee camps, a humanitarian blockade and the deliberate starvation of civilians.

The atrocities have heightened the spectre of escalating conflict across the entire Horn of Africa, with tensions rising between Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt and Somalia.

■ ETHIOPIA, A5

## European Union aims to tighten its control of vaccine shipments

■ A4

## Montreal businessman joins first fully private trip to space station

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