

Alberta funds COVID-19 antibody testing among Edmonton children in CHILD Cohort Study

EDMONTON, AB (10 September 2020)

A two-year project at the University of Alberta measuring COVID-19 antibody prevalence among Albertan children is underway thanks to funding from the Government of Alberta.

The project, which is part of the CHILD Cohort Study (CHILD), has received an award of nearly \$700,000 to carry out the work. CHILD is a ground-breaking Canadian birth cohort study that has been following nearly 3,500 Canadian children and their families in four provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario) from pre-birth to school-age.

The funding was [announced](#) by the Government of Alberta as part of a \$10-million investment that will use serology testing to track the spread of COVID-19 across the province. The two-year CHILD project will be led by Dr. Piush Mandhane, associate professor of pediatrics in the University of Alberta's Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry and lead of the CHILD Edmonton site.

"Serologic tests are blood tests that measure antibodies in the blood," said Dr. Mandhane. "Our study will collect blood samples from Edmonton children, with a focus on CHILD participants, to look for antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 infection, the virus that causes COVID-19. Antibodies are specific proteins your body makes in response to an infection. This antibody test will show if an individual has been exposed to the virus in the past."

"Alberta Health is partnering with the CHILD cohort in Edmonton to conduct ongoing COVID-19 antibody testing on 1,000 child participants. This study will help us estimate the number of children in Alberta who have been exposed to COVID-19, how this value changes over time, and provide us more information to assist our response and refine our advice to Albertans," commented Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

"Canadians have been profoundly impacted by COVID-19 and the public health measures put into place to reduce community spread of the virus," said Dr. Padmaja Subbarao, CHILD's Director. "We are truly fortunate in Canada to have CHILD as a platform for national and provincial health research, and to be able to leverage our existing cohort of 3,500 families (12,000 individuals) to generate rapid information about the impacts of COVID-19 in children."

About the CHILD Cohort Study:

Launched in 2008 by CIHR and AllerGen NCE, the [CHILD Cohort Study \(CHILD\)](#) is tracking nearly 3,500 Canadian infants and their families to help determine the root causes of chronic diseases such as asthma, allergies and obesity. CHILD spans four provinces, involving over 140 multidisciplinary researchers, students and research staff. [Watch the CHILD Cohort Study videos.](#)

About the U of A Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry:

The Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta is a leader in educating and training exceptional practitioners and researchers of the highest international standards. The faculty's mission is to advance health through excellence in teaching, research and patient care. It is home to one of the top 100 ranked medical schools in the world.

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