

# CARE

COVID-19 Attitudes, Resilience  
and Epidemiology

## CARE Survey 6: COVID-19 rapid antigen testing and changes over time

Research commissioned by the Victorian Department of Health



## **Suggested citation:**

Niamh Meagher, Katitza Marinkovic Chavez, Lauren Carpenter, Colin McDougall, Stephanie Fletcher-Lartey, David Price, Margaret Hellard, Lisa Gibbs, Freya Shearer. “CARE Survey 6: COVID-19 rapid antigen testing and changes over time.” Report to the Victorian Department of Health. University of Melbourne. December 2021.

## **Acknowledgements:**

Participants responding to the survey

Optimise study team

YouGov





# SURVEY SUMMARY

- 1,019 participants surveyed
- Survey conducted from 6th to 15th December, 2021
- Cross-sectional comparisons of each survey of approximately 1,000 participants are presented to track changes over time
- A significant proportion of the December sample are repeat participants:
  - 591 completed three surveys (July, September and December)
  - 205 completed two surveys (September and December)
  - 223 completed one survey (December only)
- Results have been weighted by age, gender and location, and are representative of Victorian adults (18+ years)

# CONTEXT OF SURVEY

- Increased availability of self-administered rapid antigen testing (RAT)
- Very high coverage of two dose vaccination course (>90% of 12+ years)
- Updates to the recommendations for 3<sup>rd</sup> doses of COVID-19 vaccines
  - Interval between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> doses shortened to 5 months
- TGA and ATAGI approve use of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in 5 to 11 year old children
  - Rollout of vaccines for this age group announced for 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2022
- Easing of public health and social measures
- Changes in border restrictions and testing requirements for travel
- Early stages of emergence of the Omicron variant in Australia



# **MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**

# MENTAL HEALTH

- The Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) tool was used to assess mental health
  - Anxiety scores were similar in comparison to the September survey
  - There was an improvement in depression scores compared to the previous survey

	Anxiety Score		Depression Score	
	December	September	December	September
Normal	57.3%	53.8%	60.3%	44.8%
Elevated	19.1%	20.3%	22.4%	28.3%
High	23.6%	25.9%	17.3%	26.9%



# SELF AND COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

- Respondents were asked how confident that:
  - a) they could manage (i.e., self efficacy) and;
  - b) Victoria can manage (i.e., collective efficacy)until the disruptions due to COVID-19 were over
- Questions was scored on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 was “not confident at all” and 10 was “extremely confident”
- Participants responding with a score of 7 or greater on both these questions were considered to be confident

# EFFICACY RESULTS

- Self efficacy scores have increased slightly since the September survey
- Compared to September, more participants feel confident that Victoria will manage until disruptions caused by COVID-19 are over

	Self efficacy		Collective efficacy	
	December	September	December	September
Confident	79.3%	74.4%	62.3%	50.5%
Not confident	20.7%	25.6%	37.7%	49.5%

# ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- 39.1% of participants required mental health support during the pandemic
- Of those who did need support (39.1%) approximately half received support (20.0%)

	<b>Weighted N</b>	<b>Weighted %</b>
No, I did not require support	620	60.9%
Yes, and I was able to get support	204	20.0%
Yes, but I did not seek support	121	11.9%
Yes, but I could not get support	74	7.2%

# SAFETY

- Just over half of participants (56.6%) felt safe from COVID-19 in general
- The majority felt safe from COVID-19 in the home (87.8%)
- Feelings of safety in the community and places or work or study were lower than in the home:
  - 51.4% felt safe from COVID-19 in the community
  - 47.4% felt safe from COVID-19 in their place of work or study

*NB. This data was collected in the very early days of the emergence of omicron*

# SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Respondents were asked about their social connections for both providing and receiving practical or emotional support
  - The majority (70.2%) had at least two people who they could rely on

	<b>How many people can you rely on?</b>	<b>How many people rely on you?</b>
More than 5 people	16.7%	13.2%
2-5 people	53.5%	55.0%
One person	18.0%	20.2%
No one	11.8%	13.2%

# HOPE

- Just over half of participants felt hopeful about their future (53.5%) and the future of Australia (42.6%)
  - Feelings of hopefulness for self and Australia had increased slightly since the September survey
- Only 32.6% were hopeful about the future of the world

	Hope for own future		Hope for Australia's future		Hope for world's future	
	December	September	December	September	December	September
Optimistic	53.5%	47.4%	42.6%	39.1%	32.6%	33.0%
Neither pessimistic or optimistic	23.2%	30.4%	24.7%	25.3%	27.6%	26.9%
Pessimistic	23.3%	22.2%	32.7%	35.6%	39.7%	40.1%

## For more information on:

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