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Half of Canadians at “High Risk” On Their Mental Health

Women, lower-income and younger Canadians at most risk

Toronto, ON, October 14, 2020 — The COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant source of stress for people around the world and as a result, our mental health has suffered. A myriad of studies around the world note how the mental health challenge has been growing in its significance since the pandemic hit. Ipsos has been tracking the mental health of Canadians since 2015 and has been closely monitoring the impact of the pandemic as the situation has evolved through the ebbs and flows of the pandemic and the accompanying preventative measures including lockdowns.

A recent Ipsos poll highlights the depth of the pandemic-induced challenges. Based on the levels of stress and emotional strain Canadians express having faced over the past year, a “Mental Health Risk Index” was developed. The study shows that half of Canadians (49%) have experienced stress and depression levels that classify them as being at “high risk.” This is a full 14 percentage points higher than 5 years ago and is at a level sustained from earlier in the pandemic (March 2021).

The relevance of this year’s theme for World Mental Health Day 2021, i.e. ‘Mental health care for all’, is highlighted by the disproportionate impact on some of the most vulnerable groups:

Mental health is a bigger challenge for some Canadians than others

Not unexpectedly, but disturbing nevertheless, are the groups in society that appear to be challenged most: the young, lower-income and women.

- 54% of women can be classified as ‘high risk’ compared to 42% of men
- 51% of lower-income can be classified as ‘high risk’ compared to 44% of higher-income
- A full 73% of Gen Z and 61% of Millennials can be classified as ‘high risk’ compared to 49% of Gen X and 26% of Boomers.



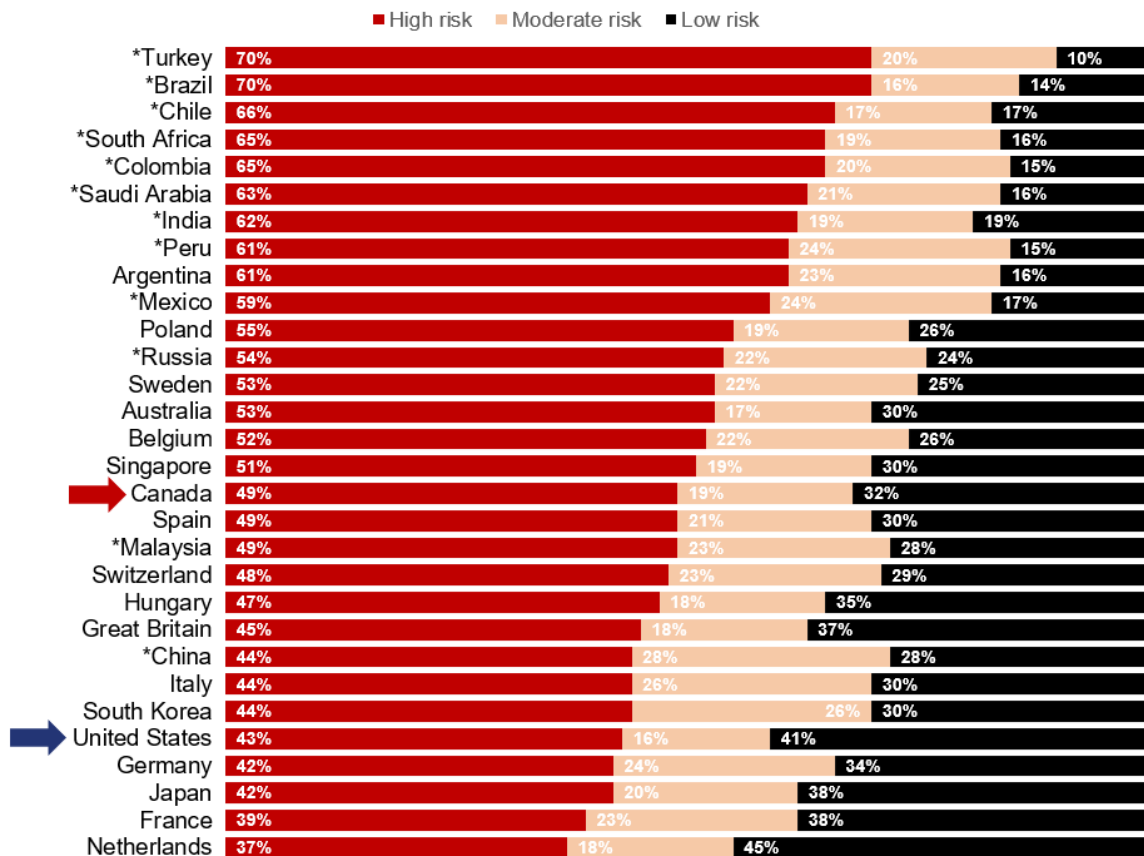
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So how are Canadians faring compared to other countries?

Mental health risk varies widely by country. Among the 30 countries surveyed, Canada fares in the middle of the spectrum: the proportion at high risk in Canada (49%) is higher than 13 other countries, including the US (43%), Great Britain (45%), Italy (44%) and South Korea (44%). But it is lower than 16 other countries including those topping the list: Turkey (70%), Brazil (70%), Chile (66%), South Africa (65%) & Colombia (65%).

While all countries are faced with significant challenges with respect to mental health among their citizens, the least at-risk countries feature Netherlands, France, Japan, Germany and the United States from the Global North while the ones facing the most risk are mostly comprised of the Middle Eastern and Latin American nations.

Mental health risk by country



Other relevant findings include...



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- 53% of Canadians say that they “often” think about their mental health vs 69% who do so about their physical health
- 81% of Canadians think that mental and physical health are equally important (vs 10% who think mental health is more important, and 5% who feel physical health should be prioritized)
- 53% say that the healthcare system treats physical health as most important, 25% equally important, 6% mental health more important

So what is the bottom line?

If not already, dealing with emotional and mental health challenges should be front and centre as governments and businesses navigate through and hopefully, out of the pandemic. Increasing public awareness of mental health issues and increasing willingness to tackle them head-on are the right steps in the direction, but more remains to be done to boost the emotional health of the nation’s citizens and support coping with the pandemic-induced uncertainty and frustrations.

About the Study

These are the results of a 30-market survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform. Ipsos interviewed a total of 21,000+ adults, aged 18-74 in the United States, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, and Turkey, and age 16-74 in 23 other markets in early September 2021.

The sample consists of approximately 1,000 individuals in each of Australia, Belgium, Canada, mainland China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the US, and 500 individuals in each of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Turkey, Singapore and Switzerland.

The samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, the US, Switzerland and Singapore can be taken as representative of their general adult populations under the age of 75.

The samples in Brazil, mainland China, Chile, Colombia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Turkey are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these countries should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more “connected” segment of their population.

The data is weighted so that each country’s sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data.

“The Global Country Average” reflects the average result for all the countries and markets where the survey was conducted. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country or market and is not intended to suggest a total result.



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Where results do not sum to 100 or the “difference” appears to be +/-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of “don’t know” or not stated responses.

The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

The publication of these findings abides by local rules and regulations.

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About Ipsos

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Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP www.ipsos.com

