



## Ebola Risk Perception Survey

### Top Line Report

#### OVERVIEW

The Carleton University Survey Centre conducted a survey of Ebola risk perception for the *Communication, Risk and Public Health Research Group* at Carleton University in the first week of September 2014. The questions are a partial replication of a general population survey conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health in August 2014. A random sample of Ontario residents was contacted via telephone. A total sample of 598 cases was achieved. The response rate to the survey was very high (33%). The margin of error for total respondents is +/- 4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The sample was weighted by gender and education level for precision.

1. EB-01. How closely are you following news about the recent outbreak of Ebola in West Africa?

Are you following the news...

	Frequency	%
Very closely	100	17
Somewhat closely	200	50
Not very closely	119	20
Not at all closely	54	9
Haven't heard of Ebola	21	4
N=	589	100

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Generally, Ontarians are following the news about the Ebola outbreak closely. Sixty-seven percent of respondents said they were following the outbreak either 'somewhat' or 'very' closely. Less than 30% of the respondents say they are not following the outbreak closely and only 4% say they have not heard of Ebola. A similar proportion (62%) of respondents to the Harvard survey said they were following the outbreak closely. Thirty-seven percent of Americans said they were not following the outbreak closely.

2. EB-02. Are you concerned that there will be a large outbreak of Ebola inside Canada within the next 12 months, or are you not concerned about that?

	Frequency	%
Very concerned	77	14
Somewhat concerned	176	31
Not very concerned	176	31
Not at all concerned	135	24
Don't know		
N=	564	100

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

The concern among Ontarians about an Ebola outbreak in Canada is varied. Forty-five percent of Ontario respondents are at least 'somewhat' concerned that Ebola will come to Canada while thirty-one percent of respondents say they are 'not very' concerned and 24% say they are 'not at all' concerned. In comparison with the U.S. results, Americans are more polarized on this question than Ontarians: 37% of respondents say they are 'very' or 'somewhat' concerned, 2% saying they are 'not very' concerned and 59% say they are 'not at all' concerned that Ebola will break out inside the United States.

3. EB-06. To the best of your knowledge, if a person is sick with Ebola and has symptoms, how easily is Ebola spread from that person to other people?

	Frequency	%
Very easily	210	40
Somewhat easily	186	36
Not very easily	110	21
Not at all easily	17	3
Don't know		
N=	522	100

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

More than three-quarters of Ontarians believe that if a person is sick with Ebola, it will spread 'easily' to other people. This is similar to the perception of transmissibility reported in the Harvard study.

4. How are you getting information about the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and whether or not Canada is affected? Check all that apply.

	Frequency	%
News Media	512	87
Social media sites	85	14
Official government website	15	3
Family member, colleague or friend	39	7
None of the above	6	1

Respondents could choose all that apply

In general, the vast majority (87%) of Ontarians are using traditional news media to get their information about the Ebola outbreak. Social media sites such as blogs, Facebook or Twitter are the next most popular sources of information on Ebola, with 14% of respondents reporting they rely on these sources for news and information.

5. Public health authorities have said the risk of the Ebola virus spreading to Canada and causing an outbreak here is very low. How confident are you in this risk assessment?

	Frequency	%
Very confident	237	42
Somewhat confident	225	40
Not very confident	79	14
Not at all confident	19	3
N=	560	100

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Ontarians are confident that public health authorities are assessing the risk of Ebola spreading to Canada accurately. Eighty-two per cent say they are 'somewhat' or 'very' confident in this risk assessment.

6. In response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, some countries have banned travel to and from the affected regions. Is this something that Canada should do?

	Frequency	%
Yes	435	82
No	93	18
N=	528	100

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

A strong majority of Ontarians (82%) think travel to and from the affected regions should be banned by Canada.

7. Canada has been involved in developing an experimental vaccine to treat Ebola. In your opinion, how high should the priority be for the development of this vaccine?

	Frequency	%
Very high priority	324	59
Somewhat high priority	183	33
Not very high priority	31	6
Low priority	16	3
N=	554	100

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

The majority of Ontarians, 92%, think Canada should make development of a vaccine a high priority. Fewer than 10% of Ontarians think vaccine development should not be a high priority.

8. If Canada were to face a national emergency, such as the outbreak of threatening virus or disease, a major industrial accident, or a pandemic, which of the following sources are you **most likely** to use for trusted and timely information:

	Frequency	%
News Media	347	63
Social media sites	46	8
Official government website	122	22
Family member, colleague or friend	11	2
None of the above	25	5
N=	551	100

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

If there were a national emergency in Canada, the news media would be the source most (63%) Ontarians would use for trustworthy, timely information. Official government websites were the next source Ontarians say they would turn to for timely and trusted information (22%), followed by social media sites (8%).

9. If Canada were to face a national emergency, how likely is it that all levels of government would work together to overcome conflict and find a solution?

	Frequency	%
Very likely	201	37
Somewhat likely	240	44
Not very likely	71	13
Not at all likely	35	7
N=	589	100

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

A solid majority of respondents (81%) believe that governments would be likely to cooperate if there were a national emergency in Canada.

10. Thinking again about a national emergency in Canada, how likely do you think it would be that levels of governments would withhold information about the emergency because it would have a negative impact on the economy?

	Frequency	%
Very likely	133	24
Somewhat likely	243	44
Not very likely	114	21
Not at all likely	58	11
N=	549	100

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Although the majority (81%) of respondents believe governments would cooperate if there were a national emergency in Canada, many of them (68%) also think that it is likely the government would withhold information from the public if it were to have a negative impact on the economy. Just over 30% of respondents believe it is not likely that governments would withhold information from the public.