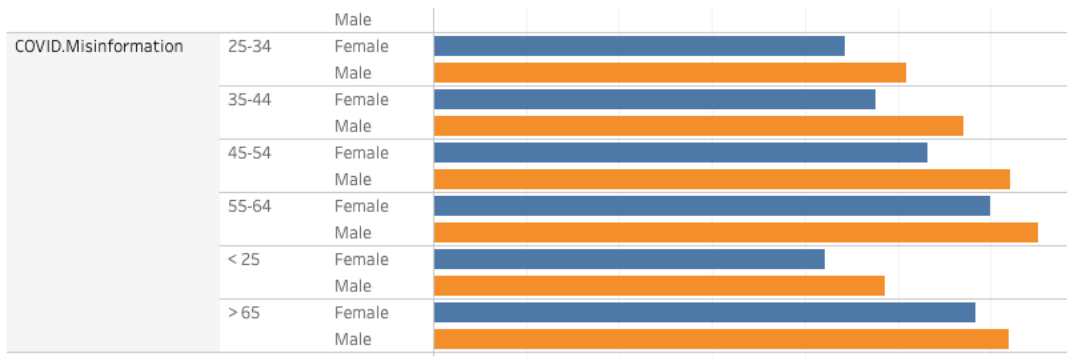




March 30, 2021 – Report on COVID Research in Ontario for the OMA

COVID Misinformation and Fears

Research conducted for the OMA has found that people ages 55-64 are the ones most engaged in discussing COVID misinformation online in Ontario.



Just under 6 per cent of the Ontario population is engaged in the discussion. Engagement is found throughout Ontario but is especially high in eastern Ontario.

Belleville	2,258	Engagement per 100K
Cornwall	4,021	
Kawartha Lakes	3,660	
Kingston	6,076	
Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo	5,117	
Ottawa - Gatineau (Ontario part / partie de l'Ontario)	6,575	
Pembroke	5,054	
Petawawa	3,342	
Peterborough	3,782	
Toronto	6,495	



ADVANCED SYMBOLICS INC.

COVID misinformation includes such things as the number of deaths were exaggerated, the vaccine causes polio, hospitals are faking COVID deaths, the vaccine will implant a microchip.

Some of the individuals engaged in these conversations are getting their information from blogs and websites that contain right-leaning rhetoric and coverage of American politics. Twenty-six per cent of misinformation came from one website.

Women are showing higher concern about health-care matters such as COVID virus variants and the Third Wave.

Men are more engaged on being frustrated with the vaccine rollout, seeing the issue through a political lens.

Both men and women ages 55-64 believe in the misinformation they are sharing, and are not on social media to dispel the myths.

It's not clear why this age group now is responsible for so much misinformation on social media, but it is concerning, given that many of them are now eligible for COVID vaccines.

Methodology:

This research was conducted by Advanced Symbolics Inc., based in Ottawa, which uses artificial intelligence to accurately predict human behaviour. This study used a randomized, controlled sample collected from social media of 200,000 Ontarians. The sample is representative of the Ontario population and the results are within an 80 per cent confidence interval with a margin of error of 1 per cent. This study looked at data from March 24, 2020, to March 24, 2021,